

ONE, MANIFOLD ;

OR,

SYSTEM:

INTRODUCTORY ARGUMENT,

IN

A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

RAIKES CURRIE, Esq., M.P.,

BY

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LONDON :

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XLVIII.

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N.B. As a division into Chapters and Sections would be inconsistent with the form and object of this publication, the above Table of Contents has been given, to shew the general nature and course of the argument, and to inform the reader of the halting-places which may be found most convenient in its perusal.

ONE, MANIFOLD;

OR,

SYSTEM.

MY DEAR SIR,

I TRUST that you will excuse me for thus publicly connecting your name with the following observations. I would even hope, that you will not regard as a trespass or intrusion upon you, that which I feel to be a privilege and advantage to myself. While disclaiming, as I am bound to disclaim, any right, or indeed any intention, to commit you to the sentiments which this Letter contains; and knowing, as I must know, how improbable it is, that all the opinions expressed in it should be in perfect conformity with your own; I have yet the satisfaction of believing, that the subject is one, which, from its intrinsic importance, will excite some interest in your mind; and I am sure, that you will receive with a favourable indulgence any suggestions, which have their origin in a love of truth, and a sincere desire to meliorate the condition of humanity.

The sequel will shew, why it is that I consider a plain and brief announcement of the views which I entertain, to be a matter quite as much of duty, as of choice. It will likewise shew, why I am anxious to throw my remarks into an epistolary form; a form which allows, perhaps, more freedom of discussion than any other.

The reasons, why I should address them to yourself, are very easily stated. I venture to address this Letter to you, because, from the erection of that Church, of which I have now been minister for many years, you have uniformly taken an active and charitable part in its concerns ; and may, therefore, stand as the representative of a congregation to which I am deeply indebted : I moreover address it to you, as one by whose friendly advice I have on several occasions been benefitted ; and to whom I must always be grateful for other acts of kindness, which no words, however, can repay : as one, also, whose name and position in the world may help to secure for the substance of this publication an attention which it might not otherwise command.

Yet another reason is the following. My present object is to enunciate broadly and in distinct terms a proposition in respect to which I had some conversation with yourself, about six years ago, at your residence in the country.—Little of formal method is needed, or expected, in an address of this kind. But, for the sake of perspicuity, I would distribute what I have to say under three heads ; my intention being, in the first place, to state, by way of preamble or introduction, the immediate inducements which now lead me to come forward with the proposition in question ; then, to submit the proposition itself, with such definitions and comments as may obviate misapprehension ; and, at the close, to offer some explanatory observations, which could not conveniently be placed under either of the foregoing divisions.

I. I would begin, then, by prefacing the proposition which is to form the main purport of this letter, by a statement of the special considerations which urge me to put it forth, without more delay, at the existing conjuncture ; and which render me, I confess, earnestly solicitous to gain a hearing for it.

The chief of these considerations, or, I might even say the sum of them, is the character of the times in which we live—the new page which has just been opened in the history of the civilized world. It is natural, indeed, for the men of every generation, seeing and feeling the immediate pressure of circumstances, to look upon their own age as a crisis in the lifetime of nations, and to attach a prodigious importance to the operations and affairs, in which they are themselves actors, or at least spectators. Fear, fancy, the mere love of excitement, can always conjure up critical and terrible exigencies: and all of us whose hair is becoming grey have seen and survived more than one of these, at which it may be difficult to look back without a smile. But the present period, I conceive, really is, what so many other periods have been stated, or supposed to be. Upon the calmest and most impartial estimate which can be formed, we must arrive at the conclusion, that the occurrences of the year 1848 are almost unprecedented in seriousness and magnitude: that they are pregnant with immense consequences, whether for good or for evil: and that they may be declared, without exaggeration, to constitute an era, or turning-point, in the destinies of the human race. For these transactions are not only wide, multitudinous, startling in their aspect, but they involve the largest and most fundamental principles: they have not merely spread over the surface of society, but they penetrate its entire structure, and strike down into its roots.

We stand, in fact, in the presence of amazing events. Europe is just recovering—perhaps scarcely recovering even yet—from one of the mightiest explosions, by which its thrones, its institutions, and its usages, have ever been shaken. Parts of it are still reeling with the shock. The forces of disturbance have all been let loose; the elements of political and social mutation have been upheaved from their inmost depths. We have beheld revolution itself hurry forward from capital

to capital almost as swiftly as the news of it could travel. We have heard the North calling to the South, and the South calling to the North, with a voice which cried out for change. We have seen insurrection bursting out almost simultaneously in many quarters, like a fire, till a whole continent was enwrapped in one general conflagration. We have seen nations, like individuals, passing on the torch of innovation from city to city, from province to province ; from Paris, the focus of disorder, to Milan, to Rome, to Naples, to Berlin, to Munich, to Vienna.

Still, after these astonishing occurrences, the world seems once more to enjoy an interval, in which it may pause for a moment, and collect its thoughts. Let us make use of this breathing time, while we may ; for we know not how long it will last. Even as I write, even before these few observations can be printed, it may have passed again into agitation and storm ; and Europe may be plunged into the agonies and paroxysms of another convulsion. Nevertheless, the lull which has actually been diffused affords some opportunity for serious and deliberate reflection, so that we may gather, with less of distraction, one or two of the great lessons of the day.

One at least of these lessons is, that we should cease to look upon any event as chimerical or visionary, merely because it is of vast extent ; or because it does not correspond with ordinary anticipation, nor has been dreamt of in the philosophy of the past. The last six months must have taught us how communities, fond of pleasure, or tranquil in apparent repose, may be as the crater of a volcano : how the most prudent and experienced statesmen may be taken by surprise : how the most sagacious monarch may wake, as from a trance, to find himself an exile : how the workmen of a land may, on the instant, become its sovereigns, and mechanics, as by the wand of a magician, be exalted above kings ; how dynasties, deemed secure at least against all present

assault, absolutely require the most trivial and familiar images to express their insecurity, their fragility, their nothingness ; for that they are shivered like glass, and thrown down like a house of cards :—nay, how the chief performers in the astounding drama may be themselves astounded at the parts and scenes in which they are engaged. The last six months have shewn us the boldest, the most comprehensive, and not the least ingenious schemes of universal polity placarded upon the walls from hour to hour ; and the actions of the people in the streets outstripping the speculations of the philosopher in the closet. The incredible has, in short, become the actual. Imagination herself has panted after the realities, aghast and out of breath. “The impossibilities of yesterday are the necessities of to-day.”

Without question, much of all this has been too violent to last. It is altogether

“... too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say, It lightens.”

Neither is it possible to conjecture what will be the next phase of a revolution, which has already been more variable than the changes of the moon ; and to which no parallel can be found, if we take into account together the compass, the depth, and the rapidity of the alterations. Who indeed can prognosticate what strange and portentous appearances, what “varieties of untried being” shall arise out of the throes of a heaving and fermenting mass, where “all things totter, and the shaken world vacillates upon its base ?”

On the one hand, we know that the miseries of anarchy and civil strife are soon felt to be intolerable ; and that few, who have the means of escape, will remain in a metropolis of which the normal state is commotion. True, therefore, it is, that the extreme democrats of France have already by their crimes and frenzies caused a re-action against themselves, and

brought down upon their own heads a terrific and bloody chastisement. We know, too, that if men pretend to live centuries in a day, and to crowd the work of years into the convulsive efforts of an hour, they will, sooner or later, have to pay the penalty of their precipitation. It can hardly, therefore, be expected that institutions will be permanent, which have so far outrun habits ; that they can start at once into a full and robust maturity, having had no time for implantation and growth, or for becoming interwoven with the customs and associations of a long-established community.

But then it is scarcely probable, on the other hand, that the social machine of Europe, after so unexampled and rending a concussion, can spring back, whatever its elasticity, into its former shape ; or perform its ancient movements equably and without interruption. The scattered fragments can hardly come together, so as to be compacted and cemented anew. No such restoration can be complete. Some may, perhaps, think that a flood of change is now indeed poured over many countries ; but that the old things will re-appear in their old places, as soon as the inundation has subsided. I must rather believe, that some at least of the almost immemorial landmarks, to which the eyes and minds of men had been so accustomed, as to consider them destined for perpetual duration, will have irrecoverably vanished ; and that the stream of political and social existence can never again flow quite in its former bed. That which we have witnessed, let us remember, is not a mere outbreak—German, or Italian, or even French : it is an European revolution : it is a revolution more than European : it is in some sense œcumenical . and must be felt, in its results, if not in its immediate action, over the entire globe. They, who reasonably doubt, whether ancient monarchies can be transmuted at a blow into vigorous and healthy republics, may be, nevertheless, convinced that the stupendous events, which have occurred since

February last, must exert upon after times an influence commensurate with their own greatness. Such things as these cannot come and go, and leave no trace. Where so much has been dislocated, and unhinged; where so many pillars of stateliness and strength have been shattered, as by an earthquake; where determinations so stern, energies so wild and daring, have been flung up from the central abysses of a population,—it were idle to suppose that government and order, even when they resume their march, will fall precisely into the previous routine, or that European civilization will settle back into the state, which has been so widely and rudely broken up.

For it must also be borne in mind, that this fiery outburst of revolution, sudden as it has been, and in a certain sense accidental, is yet connected with causes, which long have been, and still are, in constant operation. And these causes must, of course, be adequate to the effects. The common remark, how slight causes give rise to vast effects, is, after all, a mere fashion of speaking: and either it cannot in reality be true, or it can refer only to the proximate cause, and not to those deeper and more efficient causes, which are somewhat remote from observation. But, for the most part, what we call the proximate cause is not so much the cause, as the occasion. Beautifully, indeed, has it been said, "Behold, how great a flame a little fire kindleth!" Yet, when a single spark produces the tremendous ignition, the train must have been laid; or, at least, combustible materials in a sufficient quantity must have been ready for the blaze.

The causes too—continuous and growing causes—which are now operating towards momentous changes, both at home and abroad, are either actually patent; or, if not always lying upon the surface, are discoverable without much difficulty, by candid and patient investigation.

I say, both at home and abroad, because some at least of these causes are at work among ourselves ; and the very difference, which has been recently so conspicuous between England and the Continent, may tend to throw light upon the subject.

England, by the Divine blessing, has been enabled to ride out the tempest ; while other vessels, many and majestic, have foundered ; and, while sea and shore are strewn with their wrecks. In our own good ship—to pursue the metaphor a little further—not a plank has given way, and scarcely a timber has been strained. With us the advice of an illustrious, though expatriated, man, M. Guizot, has been hardly needed, that we should hold fast to our constitution and to our faith, and reverence our traditions. The attempt to revolutionize Great Britain, after the model of Paris, has been signally and totally put down : crushed, in fact, and overwhelmed, rather than defeated. The cause of law and order has asserted its supremacy among us, with a triumph the more glorious, that it has been achieved without blood. The citizens in our towns at once took the matter into their own hands : so that no necessity arose for having recourse to that humane and disciplined firmness, that admirable union of courage and temper, which our soldiers have almost invariably exhibited in our civil disturbances. Even in Ireland, rebellion has been paralysed, so soon as it would pass from words into deeds, and would lift up its arm to strike.

Now, what is the inference to be deduced from these notorious facts ? In what, humanly speaking, consists the secret of our security ? It consists partly, of course, in the circumstance, that our civil, religious, and domestic scheme of life is time-honoured and time-hallowed ; more in the circumstance, that the various parts of it have a firm coherence and agreement among themselves ; and more, again, in the circumstance, that England already possesses a degree of prac-

tial liberty—of liberty social as well as political,—and the social is even the more valuable of the two,—larger and more real than is enjoyed, perhaps, in any other region under the sun. In other words, our institutions are broad, and therefore strong: they are not as an enormous edifice with a narrow basis, which the first hurricane is sure to overthrow. We may have no sympathy with the turbulence of mobs, and the noisy selfishness of demagogues; we may repudiate that abusive vituperation which is for ever insisting upon “the conspiracy of crowned heads against human rights;” from habit, or taste, or temperament, we may turn with an intuitive dislike from sophists, declaimers, rhetoricians, the framers of abstract constitutions, which are utterly inapplicable where they are meant to be applied; we may be thoroughly persuaded, that the principle of stability must be joined with the principle of movement, and the principle of adaptation with the principle of progression: but, nevertheless, the indications of the age cannot be mistaken without wilful self-delusion; and neither can they be safely neglected. They convey to us the admonition, that, if we wish institutions to endure and flourish, we must widen the foundations on which they rest. They teach us the two-fold tendency of all things, at once to consolidation and to expansion.

For the main cause, after all, of political and social changes is the law of progress itself, the great inevitable truth of human development. Never, at any former period, was the fact of this development so visible. How many and how undeniable are the signs! We trace them in the greater breadth of the problems discussed, and the greater number of persons who discuss them; in the scope, the boldness, and the keenness of research; in the extended sphere of mental culture and mental activity; in the increase of educational and instructional provisions; in the grasp and largeness of purpose gradually becoming visible in the undertakings of

the day ; and in the disposition which prevails towards mutual aid and associated action. We trace them in the new views which are entertained of social economy, and the augmented degree of importance which is annexed to social questions, in contradistinction to those which are merely political ; we trace them in the growing distaste for war, as belonging only to a savage state of society ; in the practice, now so frequently adopted, of submitting national disputes to the arbitration of friendly or neutral powers ; and in the decay, if not the extinction, of that barbarous principle, which made international enmities a part of national virtue ; we trace them in a velocity of locomotion, which our ancestors, in their most soaring visions, never conceived, from place to place, from country to country, by means of steam-vessels and rail-roads : in the greater freedom of commerce ; in the increased facilities of intercourse, and in the infinitely multiplied communication between nation and nation, man and man ; in the almost instantaneous diffusion of intelligence through the electric telegraph, as “ by the agency of lightning, and with the speed ; ” we trace them in the more general acquaintance of men with the thoughts and languages of each other, and in that kindly wisdom which is gradually gathering the well-informed persons of the age into a republic of science and letters ; we trace them in the amount of charity, in the impetus given to the prosecution of useful and beneficial designs ; in the spread of colonization ; and, still more, in the dissemination of the Bible, and the missionary spirit of Christianity. We trace them in the sounder and more righteous sentiments which are cherished as to the connexion between all classes and all interests ; in the dissolution of old parties, the disuse of old party watchwords, and the formation of new and more generous combinations ; in the recognition of the “ consensus ” which must exist between all the members of the body politic, as of the human frame ; their universal interdependence, their

perpetual reciprocity of influence ; in the fact, as Louis Blanc expresses it, that the whole of a society must fall together, or be elevated together ; or, to borrow the words of Mr. J. S. Mill, "that we can never either understand in theory, or command in practice, the condition of a society in any one respect, without taking into consideration its condition in all other respects."

In short, mechanical, economical, intellectual, moral, and religious causes are now all concurring to one end ; they are bringing men into union, and at the same time giving fresh force to their individual wills and capacities.

The strength and the operation of these causes have an obvious tendency to increase, henceforward, in a geometrical ratio.

At any rate, the pulses of human life beat, at this epoch of our race, with a quicker and stronger vibration than heretofore. The movements of society are broader, more profound, more powerful, than they have hitherto been. Mankind are forming themselves into larger and larger associations, coalescing with a wider and wider federalism, and familiarizing themselves more and more with conventions and congresses, called together for a variety of objects, and composed oftentimes of deputies from both hemispheres.

We must adapt our measures to our circumstances. No doubt, as more activities are developed, more interests involved, more minds engaged, more volitions exercised, the regulation of the world becomes a graver, a more complicated, a more difficult task ; but the progression of humanity is still certain. We must accept this great fact with all its conditions attached to it.

Besides, without indulging in dreams of human perfectibility on earth, and without denying that the forces of confusion and mischief are abroad, the symptoms of advance-

ment and improvement are, on the whole, abundantly sufficient to encourage and animate us.

On the other side, it must be confessed, that there remain serious chasms and deficiencies even in those respects where the present generation has done more than the preceding. It is also true that another picture might be drawn—yet this too should animate us—the picture of the evils and disorders which still afflict human communities, with our own among the rest, and the need of providing some large scheme of speedy and effective remedies. But I refrain from attempting the delineation in these few preliminary remarks; lest I should either seem to exaggerate it by statements made without the requisite qualifications, or should utterly fail to do justice to the affecting and solemn warning which it ought to present.

Enough must have been said to demonstrate, that, in addition to those ominous phenomena which have shot up like meteors in the sky of France, there must throng and press around us a multitude of other circumstances, which may now make every thinking man look with a peculiar solicitude to the future fortunes of the species. Before, indeed, those events occurred, which have convulsed Europe from end to end, a vague and general feeling had displayed itself in the common discourse, the journals, and the literature of the day, to the effect that a new æra was commencing, and that the world, in some respects, was about to start upon a fresh career. To this effect, there has been long a dull and muttered sound, week after week waxing louder and more distinct. The essential properties of human nature, it was said in more quarters than one, are the same in all ages and all climes. But many of the forms of social existence are antiquated, effete, and must pass away. The mould itself is broken, and society cannot be recast in it.

In these sentiments, thus expressed, I cannot altogether participate. God forbid, for instance, that the red flag of

communism should be hoisted on our shores, or be seen floating from our steeples ! Generally, too, that which is beneficial to nations is gradual transition, careful expansion and amendment, rather than abrupt and violent change. Still the horizon of thought and action is extending itself, and will extend itself, with an indefinite, and as yet incalculable, enlargement. Thousands and thousands of lines are stretching themselves out in all directions, and yet at the same time converging to a common centre. The current of human life rolls on with an ampler volume ; for the tributary waters are more in number, and there is a confluence of all their streams. This or that wave may apparently recede ; but, if we only watch, we cannot fail to perceive that the tide is flowing, and with an accumulated force. I use by design the ordinary, and even trite figures and analogies, as best conveying the prevalent impression ; and, therefore, I would add this other of a somewhat different kind, namely, that we might as well think of resting a pyramid upon its apex, as of now resting the whole of human affairs upon a few persons, or a few interests.

But there is on this account, I would reiterate, no room for despondency. However men may have trembled, and with reason, at some of those awful shapes which have emerged out of the late chaos on the Continent, we are now able in some measure to discriminate the general and abiding features of the time, from such as are only variable and transient : and perhaps even those things which have shocked and terrified us, may be turned to advantage, and made to have a better and brighter aspect. It is no real matter of lamentation, that, in countries which have been kept down by despotism or oligarchy, many portions of the ancient *regime* have gone, or must go. Thus, it is evident, that might, physical and material might, must be the ultimate arbiter of disputes, and that it is a weapon of which rulers must

make use in extremities ; but it has become an instrument, on which they cannot presume or place reliance, or which may even prove as a reed, weak to restrain others, yet sharp to pierce themselves, when the population,—I do not say the rabble,—is arrayed against them. Not the right employment of police and armies, but the reign of military domination, must go. With all that has just happened in France before our eyes, I repeat it, the reign of military domination must go : because despotic states must discover the possibility, that troops, however brave and stanch in the case of unjustifiable and wanton sedition, will be reluctant to act against their fellow-citizens if insulted and oppressed. The reign of mere coercion must go : for a whole people cannot be coerced. The reign of mere dictation must go : for, although knowledge will be power, and although the stronger minds will lead the weaker, still public opinion will prevail over individual dogmatism ; and authority, though in civil matters supreme, must, even there, rest upon this public opinion ; while, in other matters, the *prestige* of mere authority has departed, and men will think for themselves, rather than take things upon trust. But, if these premises are correct, what follows ? It simply follows, that resort must really and fully be had to intellectual and moral influences ; that, as some forces which have mainly governed the world, now, without being extinguished, or being stripped of their lawful province, yet sink, or wane, in comparison with their previous dominion, other forces must mount into the ascendant, and take the lead in the world's government : that the business must be to enlighten, train, and Christianize communities ; and then to lay before them those wide and diversified, yet harmonious, arrangements, which enlightened, moral, and Christian communities may approve.

Under such circumstances, it may be safely affirmed, more of genuine deference, more of true obedience, will be

paid to legitimate and constituted rule, as less of abject submission is exacted by penal enactments, or by the sword. Under such circumstances, a country, at least, like England, will continue to be the home and sanctuary of unviolated order, and of a religious respect for the laws, and their administrators. Personal judgment, the sense of freedom, the habit of self-government, will be the props which uphold the throne; will confirm attachment and veneration for those institutions and ordinances, which they have themselves a share in framing and maintaining.

But I need not dwell upon these common-places. I should not have mentioned them, but that I would not be supposed to advocate extravagant and extreme notions; and that I wish to be clearly understood on a matter, on which, nevertheless, it is not easy, as I know, to prevent misconception. The main point, as all will agree, is, that men must now devote themselves to the great and serious purposes for which they have received the inestimable gift of life; and must address themselves together to these purposes, with an energetic and comprehensive spirit. Happy is it, that the true ends of existence being better understood than in times past, more persons are actually beginning to devote themselves to these purposes, and address themselves to them in this spirit; looking to the sway of religion, of reason, of truth, of right, of love,—to the dominion of great ideas.

Upon the whole, then, I would draw the following conclusion from this brief review, or summary, of the present aspect of affairs. We are on the eve, it seems to me, of what may be called the constructive æra of society. That, as the human race marches onward to its ultimate destination, the arrival of such an æra must become a mere question of time, is a conviction, I am persuaded, to which every religious and philosophical inquirer cannot but come: that

there has been long a growing tendency towards it, and that the last twenty years have vastly accelerated its approach, is an opinion, which every student of Modern History must at least acknowledge to be plausible. I do not regret that the limits which must be assigned to this Letter preclude me from expatiating on the melancholy topic, how a very large portion of human exertion and human power has been hitherto expended, consumed, wasted, in the work either of *destruction*, or of *obstruction* ; that is, not in any joint and positive efforts, made by mankind in concert, for the common welfare, but in neutralizing, counteracting, baffling, nullifying, the efforts of each other ; so that these have been employed in undoing and demolishing what those have laboured to do. My hope is, and such a hope is worth encouragement by every man within himself,—my hope is, as I have said, that such a state of things is now about to be, in part at least, succeeded by the æra of *construction*. The very mention of it, the very expectation of it, may have some influence towards helping forward its advent.

I understand by the term “construction,” something which very nearly corresponds with the scriptural expressions, “edify,” “edification,” or “the whole building fitly framed together ;” I mean, in fact, by the constructive æra of society, an æra in which the moral, intellectual, and physical powers of mankind, acting upon all the materials at their disposal, shall be employed in erecting on solid foundations the edifice of good.

If such a construction be at all practicable, either now, or at any future period of God’s development of humanity, the very momentous consideration arises, What are the principles which should characterize and direct it ? Immense must be the danger, if it be attempted by a wrong process—unspeakable the benefit, if it can be so conducted as to secure progress and improvement, without confusion and lawlessness.

Be this, however, as it may: be this constructive æra at hand or at a distance, one point will be allowed. In a state of humanity, such as has been described, so full of hope, and yet so full of uncertainty; so cheering in some respects, so gloomy and dark in others; so big with significance in all: at a period, when so many things long consecrated by usage and prescription, are brought into dispute, or unsettled, or swept away; when all questions are agitated by all men; when the gravest and profoundest problems are flung into the midst, as it were, for everybody's solution; when the most novel and surprising theories are set forth in clubs, or proclaimed in the market-place; when all things, in short, are so curiously and unscrupulously inspected, that they may be almost literally said to be turned inside out: at such a period, any man, who sincerely believes that he has any suggestion to make which may prove serviceable to the human race, is more than justified in making it;—provided only that he does not promulgate his sentiments without dispassionate and patient reflection; and that he is not actuated by mere vanity of mind, or thirst for notoriety, or any light and frivolous ambition, utterly incongruous with the circumstances around him, with the serious and critical character of the age on which he is cast. The conjuncture, in fact, is one, when the most careless must be startled out of their indifference, and when earnest men are almost compelled to give utterance to what they think.

II. I come, then, to the proposition itself, which I would submit to public consideration. It is simply this:—that *the great necessity of the age is the formation of system:—that the great want of the world, and the great task that now awaits it, is really to systematize the collective and the individual life of man; to work out the idea of system both in theory and in practice. With this idea of system must be connected the idea*

of One Manifold, losing sight neither of Unity in Variety, nor of Variety in Unity ; neither of Oneness in the Manifold, nor of Manifoldness in the One.

The mention and refutation of objections will be seen to belong to a subsequent stage of this investigation ; but it is indispensable, as has been already hinted, just to obviate certain misapprehensions, which would otherwise be stumbling-blocks upon the very threshold.

It may be said, for instance, that the thing required is, not to put the world upon system, but to regulate it in accordance with true religion, in accordance with Christianity. Now, assuredly, if the former of these things be opposed to the latter, it must fall to the ground ; and we must live according to the spirit of Christianity, if we would indeed have life. But the two objects have a perfect compatibility, and even a close affinity, with each other :—and as system is the first law of God, so it must coincide with the economy of the Gospel, regarded either as a creed, or as an institution.—But, then, system is the word of wider signification, as having immediate reference to material things as well as to moral, to the forces and elements of nature, as well as to the affections and dispositions of the heart ; and is therefore more adapted to the purpose which is here in view :—while Christianity, the crown indeed and consummation of system, because having a real bearing upon every department of existence, and itself teaching and constituting the supreme existence, proceeds on its distinct pathway of heavenly light ; and, in the sublimity of its mysteries, and the ineffable tenderness of its compassions, might be almost fettered and degraded by too minute a contact with those subjects with which it was not specially designed to intermeddle. Wise in its omissions as in its precepts, it leaves to man the independent prosecution of his secular inquiries, the free exercise of his capacities and energies in those pursuits of this world, to

which Revelation, intent on its own gracious and solemn end, but incidentally and indirectly alludes.

Others may say, that life is to be adjusted, not according to system, but according to nature, or to just knowledge, or to science, or to the rule of right; or, in the words of Fichte, that "our relations should be ordered, with freedom, according to reason." The correctness of such statements cannot be absolutely denied; yet they are capable of a reply, somewhat similar to the foregoing, and with this addition:—the misfortune is, that men, in making use of such expressions as those just specified, hardly approach a step nearer to the end of their controversies. They may discuss for ever, for example, what is right, and what it is to live according to right. The exact meaning, or proper application, of any such phrase, however glorious and precious the conception which it should bring with it, is liable to perpetual disagreement: whereas to live according to system must be in perfect consonance with these other elements of good; while system itself is a term comprehensive, and yet precise; it presents a more distinct image; its properties and conditions may be more nicely and accurately defined; it affords a kind of positive law, or objective standard, to which reference may be made; it is far easier, in short, to determine what system is, than what right is.

And there is this further advantage. The idea of system may be conceived as a single trunk, branching out into an endless number of ramifications. By taking this one idea, with the two or three undeniable axioms, or postulates, which evidently belong to it, we may place an immense inquiry upon the simplest basis; and by a strict logical demonstration we may educe from it an entire series of truths, affecting, harmonizing, adjusting, completing, all the exertions of mankind in every domain of being.

But, then, the term *system* must be rightly understood: and, therefore, some explication of it becomes necessary.

When the word *system* is mentioned, men, for the most part, immediately think of the especial system of some particular person :—they, at least, mix up their conception with the system of Aristotle or Plato, Newton or Leibnitz, Linnæus or Buffon, Hutton or Werner, Berkeley or Reid, Locke or Kant, Schelling or Hegel, Cousin or Comte, Dugald Stewart or Jeremy Bentham ; or even, perhaps, of St. Simon, or Fourier, or Cabet, or Robert Owen. They find “system” used in books and conversation, and represented in dictionaries and lexicons, as the “scheme,” or “plan,” or “method,” or “theory,” which any individual adopts ; and any improvement, real or supposed, any alteration which any man suggests in any thing, even down to the making of pens, is called his “system :” hence, there comes a prevailing distrust of the expression ; and there is oftentimes thrown over it something of ridicule.

Moreover, from this dislike of particular systems, many are induced to regard system in general as an artificial array of things, depending upon some arbitrary hypothesis, and bound together by some strained, or imaginary, principle of connexion. It appears to their minds as something at once abstruse and fanciful, presumptuous and unsound. It appears, besides, as something which belongs to men who dream, or theorize, rather than to men who act ;—to academical speculation, rather than to the conduct of life ;—to the schools, rather than to the moving and busy world. These notions, too, I believe, are more common in this country than elsewhere. Very frequently, Englishmen take a pride in being unsystematic. For in their eyes system is theory, and theory is opposed to practice ; but England is a practical nation ; it is by its practical energy that England has attained to its present height of renown and greatness ; and therefore England and system ought to have nothing to do with each other : and Englishmen are right in holding

in abhorrence and contempt “systems” and “system-mongers.”

All the fallacies imbedded in this mode of reasoning,—if, indeed, it deserves such an appellation,—I cannot stop to point out. How injurious has been the effect of such fallacies upon the science, the legislation, and the social economy of Great Britain, and how much discredit the absence of system, and the consequent want of recurrence to large, deep, and connecting principles, has brought in some cases upon our thinkers and writers, in the estimation of the philosophers and philosophical statesmen of the Continent—these, again, are matters, which must now be left to the recollection of those who are really conversant with the subject.

If, however, we required an instance of the mischief, as well as the perplexity, which accrues from the misapprehension or misapplication of terms, more especially of such as are of wide meaning, and in daily use, we could find none, in the whole compass of inquiry, more conspicuous, or more admonitory, than that which occurs with respect to the word *system*. The loose signification put upon it in the easy negligence of familiar or popular discourse might be, in itself, of trivial importance. But, in point of fact, there is introduced a pervading confusion of thought and language;—a general ambiguity, often, as has been said, amounting to positive misconception;—of which one example has just been given, and another, more serious perhaps, as having somewhat more foundation in the reality of things, remains to be brought forward.

System is very often designated, and considered, as a body, or arrangement of things, whether in science, or art, or any kind of organization, so compacted and dovetailed together, and supposed at least to be so complete, as no longer to leave room for alteration or addition. Hence follows the inference, that the formation of system must be oftentimes a

vast hinderance to true knowledge and right action, inasmuch as it would preclude all further observation and experiment ; and the very attempt to form it, before a sufficient number of particulars has been collected, must be not only abortive and useless, but actually pernicious. For the most part, the realization is impossible, and even the aspiration worse than vain.

It is a matter of some difficulty, and delicacy, to disentangle what is true from what is erroneous, in this representation. Without doubt, a common definition of system in technological dictionaries and other compilations, is a *complete body* of any art or science, which has been distinguished variously, according to the different views of those who have digested the materials into a connected form ; or, more generally, “a complete body or treatise, as opposed to the way of writing by essays, or aphorisms.” Nor is it less certain that names of the loftiest eminence are to be found among those, who, surveying the matter in this light, have spoken in dispraise of system, and in recommendation of the contrary mode of proceeding—the name of Boyle, for instance, and, to a certain extent, the still higher name of Bacon. In many cases, the scientific rigidity, the formal and finished shape, which has been assumed too soon, has been fairly considered as a detriment. Occasion has been thus given for asserting, that to affect to have formed a system, is as much as to say, “the scheme is made up, rounded off, walled and fenced about within its own definite and sacred enclosure :—the door is now shut against further accessions of information ; for these would only disturb its neatness and entireness, embarrass and bring again into question all its conclusions.” But in treating of the great aggregate of things, we are hardly bound by these technical views. They are, in a certain sense, both just and valuable : but they have reference only to that which pretends to be a *perfect* and final system. When such a pretence is made, it

is, of a truth, incumbent upon us to bear in mind, that no system can be final and perfect without a full mastery, whether intellectual or actual, over all the existences to be comprised in it. But these views lose their justness and value, if they are carried to the extent of maintaining, that the *formation* of system is not to be sought, is not to be within the scope of our endeavours, until system can at once be carried to its final perfection. They would then, if they had any validity, prove infinitely too much. For system is a necessity of man, although we should be cautious in our attempts to frame it; just as we *must* generalize, although we are bound to guard against false, rash, hasty, and premature generalization. Both the one process and the other, of generalizing and of systematizing—yet the two are, in fact, scarcely distinct—must demand care, and cannot be quite unaccompanied with danger: but men may both recognize the *existence* of system in the creation of God, and cultivate in themselves the *spirit* of system, without making any pretensions that they have yet arrived at that stage of ultimate perfection, of which even their own labours are susceptible. So far as man is concerned, system, like everything else, good or great, which can be his, must have its beginning and its rudiments, long before it can have its consummation: it cannot be grasped suddenly and at once: it must, from the infirmities and deficiencies of human nature, be in some sense progressive and even tentative: and it can only be attained, if attained at all, after many efforts and by slow degrees. Nay: perfect system is an aim which man should keep steadfastly in view; although he must feel, that, at last and at best, he can but approximate the goal, rather than reach it.

These things being premised, by way of caution, we may be quite willing to accept any of those definitions of system which are to be found in the usual books of reference; as, for instance, according to Dr. Johnson, that it is “any com-

plexure, or combination, of many things acting together :” or, “a scheme which reduces many things to regular dependence, or co-operation :” or, “a scheme, which unites many things in order :” or, again, according to Richardson, that it is “a collocation ; a construction ; a combination, or connexion of parts into a whole ; a series of connected or dependent parts ;” or, again, that it is “a scheme which reduces many things to regular dependence and subordination.” We may also at once admit, that the adjective, “systematic,” or “systematical,” means “written, or formed, with regular subordination of one part to another.”

In these several definitions, the variations, it will be seen, are exceedingly slight, as compared with the agreements. Our purpose may be abundantly answered by taking those common elements which are implied in them all ; namely, orderly composition or construction ; consistency and symmetry of divers objects or conceptions ; the relation, or connexion, of whole and parts, and of parts among themselves.

Let us observe, then, to what point we have arrived.

1. The assertion is, that life is to be regulated according to system ; and that advantages may result from this mode of expression greater, in many respects, than if it were said, that life is to be regulated according to reason, or to true knowledge, or to the rule of right.

2. System is not to be regarded as synonymous with theory, speculation, or artificial method ; but is to be taken in the sense which most exactly corresponds with its etymology, and its more approved acceptation ; as the placing of things together, or the structure of things when so placed ; the arrangement and adjustment of things in reference to the whole and to each other ; the regular constitution of things upon a plan, and with a purpose ; or, a coherent harmonious scheme of thought and action. It would be trifling and idle to contend eagerly for a mere word, or to

lay an undue stress upon it. But some term, whatever it is to be, is absolutely required for the conception and the fact which must meet us always and everywhere; and to express this fact or conception, there is, so far as I know, no term fitter, or more generally received, than *system*, to be found in any language. It has the convenience too, not however without some attendant ambiguity, of being used both subjectively, for the formation of plan, and objectively, for the plan formed or constructed.

3. The thing desired, and now had in view, is the formation not of *a* system, but of system; not the peculiar scheme or arrangement of this or that individual, associated with his name, based upon some peculiar principle, and linked together by some peculiar bond or law of connexion, of which he happens to be enamoured; but system simply as system, having the constituent elements which essentially belong to it, and bound together by the law of system itself. It is an important point, that the one of these things be sedulously and carefully disengaged from the other.

4. The formation of system may and must be gradual; it should always be contemplated, and may, to a certain extent, be attained; although it cannot at the commencement, or perhaps at any assignable period, be altogether compact and entire.

5. The system, of which we are to speak, is the system of one manifold.

In strict reasoning, perhaps, the enunciation of this last proposition is needless; for the idea of system, and the idea of one manifold, if not actually identical, yet involve or suppose each other. System, at least, according to a definition just given, and by the very force of the term, is the union of many things in order; and is, therefore, manifestly impossible, unless there be two or more things to stand, or to be put together; and, also, unless these two or more things

so stand, or are so put together as, in some sense, to become one. The primary condition or property of system is, plurality in unity ; or, what is little more than the same truth differently expressed, the gathering of parts into a whole.

There is, however, a real utility in stating that the system to be formed is a *system of one manifold*. For, by one manifold, we are to understand not merely plurality in unity, not merely multiformity in unity, but variety in unity. This is the first law, or “ formula,” of nature ; and system, which must agree with nature, must itself, therefore, be one manifold, or have variety in unity. On the side of variety, it will admit of modifications, according to the different cases in which it is to be applied ; on the side of unity, the same essential principles will be, with some latitude, always preserved. “ A system, or constitution,” says Bishop Butler, “ implies variety ; and so complicated a one as this world, very great variety.”

6. System, and especially the system of one manifold, presupposes, of course, all things that are necessary for the formation of system : as, for instance, some examination and knowledge, quantitative and qualitative, of the number, properties, and relations of the several entities, in order that we may know how, and in what proportions, they are to be combined or systematized.

And at this point I might for the present pause ; inasmuch as the immediate object of this publication is thus accomplished ; by proposing the formation of System—the system of one manifold—as the great work remaining for mankind ; and by setting forth in what manner the term *system* is to be understood. That the proposition, however, may not seem quite bare and unfruitful, it may be expedient to go somewhat further, and to indicate some, at least, of the steps and considerations to which it leads. Yet here this indication

can only be given in the way of a mere outline or skeleton-map ; or rather, perhaps, as the syllabus of a course of lectures, or the scheme of contents prefixed to a book. This syllabus, or scheme, is not intended to go into minute particulars ; and, in the actual prosecution of the design, the order, or sequence, may in some instances be altered.

First, after the exposition of the meaning of the term, must come the conception of the thing. This conception ought to be clear, just, and adequate : clear, that it may avoid the obscurity and perplexity by which the subject is still surrounded : just, that it may reject the notions not properly inherent in it : adequate, or complete, that it may discover and develop all that it really includes. As it is a matter of necessity to get rid of that which is false, so it is also needed to embrace the whole truth.

In order to obtain such a conception of the system of one manifold, we must regard it both as a question of pure, abstract, or formal science, and also as a matter of science mixed and applied. Moreover, we must understand,

1st. The nature and extent of system : that is, the system of one manifold.

2dly. Its history and statistics, as well as its philosophy : its practical applications, as well as its theory.

3rdly. Its value and necessity to mankind.

4thly. Their obligations in respect to it, together with the actual mode of proceeding to be adopted.

1. In its *nature* must be included the principles belonging to the idea of system ; such as connexion or coherence ; design or plan ; law or rule ; adaptation and arrangement ; combination and concert ; method and order ; harmony and proportion ; the right disposition and due gradation of things.

There must also be included the principles belonging to the idea of one manifold ; to either of these ideas when taken by itself, and to the two when taken together.

The principles which flow respectively from the one and the manifold, or which are logically attached to the former idea, or to the latter, may be best shewn by the following scheme.

SYSTEM.

One	Manifold
Unity	Variety
Wholeness, or Totality	Partition
Union	Division
Generalization	Particularization
Consolidation	Diffusion
Conjunction	Separation
Synthesis, or Composition	Analysis, or Resolution
Agreements	Differences
Resemblance	Diversity
Collectivity	Individualism
Co-operation	Distinctive Action
The Common to all	The Peculiar to each
The Generic	The Specific
Attraction, or Cohesion	Repulsion
Interdependence	Independence
Order	Freedom
Simultaneity	Succession
The Constant	The Variable
Sameness	Change
Continuity	Transition
Stability	Progress
&c.	&c.

The conceptions which flow out of the twofold idea of one manifold, when it is taken at once, and in its integrity, are either those which have been already specified as belonging to the main idea of system itself ; or else such as federalism, classification, and generally, the balance of forces, and that combination of opposite principles, on which depend the safety, the harmony, and the beauty of the universe. It will thus be seen, that the principles here placed in the two

parallel columns, though in some sense antagonistic, are yet correlative, necessary, serviceable to each other, and have actually a common origin. Yet a real contradistinction is observable in the midst of the interfusion; and thus we must gather from the idea of one manifold, that the true law of nature is *universal connexion*, instead of that baneful doctrine of *universal identity*, which would make spirit and matter, or even good and evil, to be the same thing.

But the mention of these words, universal connexion, brings us to the next consideration, namely, the *extent* of the system of one manifold. A just conception of its extent is as indispensable as a just conception of its nature. But, whether regarded in the logical and formal, or in the actual, point of view, this matter admits of no doubt. Wherever there is connexion, there ought to be system. To say this is to say all. For connexion without system becomes mere confusion and disorder, utter and inextricable entanglement. But connexion is universal: therefore system ought to be universal. Wherever things run into each other, or have a reciprocal influence and interdependence, there ought to be system. But what things can be mentioned, which have no influence or dependence on each other, immediate or mediate? The continuity is unbroken, the interdependence is never lost. The connexion between the extremes is not dissolved by any number of intermediate links. The connexion between the remote, though less direct, is not less real than between the proximate.

There are bonds, then, which hold together all things in the vast and complicated unity of being. And, again, as all things have a connexion in space, so they form a series, or catenation, or sequence, in time. The existing state of things is the product of that which has existed; and the whole future will be the product of the whole past and the whole present. The whole future of the whole past: because the

separate part is not the mere result of the separate part ; but the whole is the result of the whole : everything which can be named is an effect of all causes, and a cause of all effects.

But again ; as we may speak without error of causes and effects, or, at least, of antecedents and consequents, it is manifest that the connexion of all things with all is actual as well as theoretical. Many things pass into each other ; and all things act upon all for certain purposes to the production of certain ends. They are connected by their relations and movements, even more than by their nature and properties. There is a system of forces, as well as of substances : or, to borrow an expression which has been already drawn and expanded out of its native region in mathematical science, the world exhibits everywhere a vast system of dynamics as well as statics.

System, therefore, if it is to have any consistency or any truth, must be *universal*, or a *system of the whole*. It must follow every link of that mighty chain which binds together the entire mass, and the smallest atom ; the objective world and the subjective ; matter and form ; the actual and the possible ; the real and the ideal ; the immediate and the ultimate ; the profoundest abstractions of mathematical or psychological science with the roughest operations of manual labour ; the most soaring flights of the imagination with the most sober business of society ; the most ethereal and transcendental thought with the food which sustains us, or the clod of earth on which we tread. It must spread, too, as throughout all space, so throughout all duration ; from the first morning of the creation to the present hour, and from the present hour to every hour which is to come. It must regard, as both the collective and the individual, so both the mortal and the immortal, life of man ; stretching, as to communities, throughout all generations of the human species ; and, as to individuals, into the endless futurity beyond the grave.

Moreover, as it must be *universal in its extent or comprehensiveness*, so it must strive at least to be universal in its *completeness*. Its aim must be to gather all existences into itself. For, if there be no gap or chasm in nature, no *saltus*, no *hiatus*; if in the entire compass and assemblage of being, from extreme boundary to boundary, nothing is insulated; nothing stands apart, uninfluencing and uninfluenced; but every thing is fastened, whether by stronger or finer, by more palpable or more subtle, ligaments, to all the rest; and if every item, more or less, affects the sum; then it follows of necessity, not merely that, as anything is omitted or shut out, the whole calculation is vitiated; but that system ceases to be system, in proportion as it fails to be all-inclusive. As we must take the whole, so we must take all the parts of which the whole is composed.

Yet once more; it must be universal in its *all-pervadingness*:—that is, as it should be present in all departments of being, so it should be present in all dimensions and scales. For *Natura semper similis sibi, et consona*: the Author of the universe has caused this great law of system to run through the universe: the same principles, operations, and processes, are repeated, again and again, in narrower and narrower spheres; as the vast tree of existence multiplies itself into its branches; and as the parts become, in their turn, subordinated or smaller wholes.

System, finally, must be universal in its own structure;—that is, for instance, it must be a system of action, as well as a system of contemplation; a practical as well as a theoretical system; a system which regards the adaptation of means to ends, as well as the discovery of causes and consequences: and, above all, a moral as well as a material system; because moral existences, properties, relations, agencies, purposes, are quite as real, and quite as certain, as any others which the universe presents.

These truths are self-evident, as flowing either from the pure logical conception of system, or from the conception of it as applied to this universal *kosmos*,—this world of regularity and order, and yet of infinite and beautiful diversity. It further, then, becomes evident at every step, that system itself, like this *kosmos*, of which it is the law or type, must have variety in its unity ; inasmuch as it belongs to a multitude of congeries or frame of being, where no two things are alike ; and where, perhaps, not any one thing remains absolutely the same for two successive moments of duration : where all things cross, intersect, interpenetrate, each other, not merely in one way, but in a thousand ways ; where there are different modes and intensities of connexion and coherence, different kinds and degrees of unity ; and where system, therefore, as being a system of *time*, a system belonging to existences in movement and undergoing change, might be supposed, from antecedent considerations of analogy and fitness, to admit, in the midst of its oneness, variation and progressive development.

2. I proceed to another point.—It has been said, that we must understand the history and statistics of system, as well as its philosophy :—its practical applications, as well as its theory.

This fact has already become apparent ; but it will be yet more apparent upon a somewhat closer investigation ; and we shall have a clearer insight into the history and the applications, by recurring for a moment to a general view of the pure philosophical notion.

In the system, then, of one manifold, the whole, down to the atom, must be regarded as one conception, involving, under co-ordinate or subordinate groups, and throughout all the intermediate stages, innumerable conceptions : the whole is one inquiry, embracing countless inquiries ; one problem,

embracing countless problems ; one argument, comprising an infinite diversity of arguments ; one action or agency, involving unnumbered actions or agencies ; one instrumentality, including a vast series of instrumentalities ; one end, including a multiplicity of ends ; one law, involving all laws ; one construction, and a thousand constructions in one.

But all the things which have been just specified, such as inquiry, agency, instrumentalities, ends, are not only one manifold, when viewed in themselves ; but one manifold, when viewed together. Indeed, the very idea of one manifold, as well as the experienced realities of existence, must assure us, that knowledge and action, theory and practice, though with clear differences between them, are in some sense one : they are, at least, so blended and intermingled together, they have so true and intimate a connexion, that they can never be dissociated in that which is assumed to be *system*.

As system is not system unless it be universal, so neither is it system unless it be practical.

Yet further : system, as we have seen, belongs to both space and time ; to both the objective world and the subjective ; to the world of external existences, the world of ideas, the world of signs : to both persons and things ; to both physical means and moral purposes : and, moreover, as it is a system of one manifold, and as it is universal, and spreads throughout the creation from end to end ; so its principles, which in every instance, in every domain, aid and require each other, must be universal too ; and must be applied in their greatest extent. There must be the greatest unity and the greatest plurality : the most entire whole or totality, and the most minute partition : the utmost combination, and the utmost individualism : the utmost comprehensiveness, and the most particular analysis, enumeration, and specification of the several units : the utmost *ensemble*, the *simul et semel* ; and the utmost subdivision or separation : all things taken

together and at once ; each thing by itself, or one by one : all acting upon all throughout all duration ; and each acting upon each at every fraction of time.

We recur, then, to the observation, that there must be an actual application coinciding with the abstract theory.

For, in truth, as some philosophers insist upon a practical reason, as well as a speculative reason, so there exist practical principles to correspond with these theoretical principles : and little of real advancement can ever be made, unless the whole scheme of existences be not merely speculatively regarded as one manifold ; but actually taken, and reduced to practice, as one manifold.

It becomes still more impossible to resist this conclusion, when we reflect that even the abstract and the concrete, the actual and the ideal, not only throw light upon each other, but are themselves indissolubly connected in the one manifold of universal being.

But very important consequences ensue. For these considerations necessarily lead to a new or peculiar mode of *viewing all things, and dealing with all things.*

In the first place, they must be carried throughout as a *guide and test*, for the examination of the actual condition of the world :—of sciences, institutions, occupations, usages, modes of life, both in their origin, and in their present state. The essential principles of system must greatly influence our judgment of them, and our manner of treating them. The historical and statistical must be tried by the philosophical ; and the philosophical will be illustrated by the historical and statistical.

Again, these principles must be applied in all knowledge and action ; in the *formation of new sciences*, or in the elevation of old to their proper place in the scale and order of science ;—in the establishment of new undertakings, and, generally, in the regulation of life, collective and personal ;

including all the intervals and spheres, between the single existence of the individual, and the collective existence of the whole human race; and always keeping in view the indissoluble interdependence of this social and this personal existence, with the necessity of improving each for the sake of each.

Thus as to science. In system, such as we have defined it to be, it is a logical necessity, since all knowledge is one manifold, all truth is one manifold, that there should be one science, including, and yet distinguishing, all sciences.

There must be a *science of the whole*, a *prima philosophia*, embracing the first principles, relations, and connexions of all knowledge: the composition of parts into the whole, and the distribution of the whole into its parts.

There must be a real positive science of *classification*, or *arrangement*. We must, however, discern at once the necessity of this science, and the inherent imperfection. Classification is necessary; because, otherwise, the mind would be lost in the bewildering labyrinth and multiplicity of particular objects:—it is natural; because, in the multiform scheme of the world, some of the parts are bound together by closer affinities and more special connexions: they are gathered into clusters, forming classes and orders; or, in other words, from the highest class or genus, down to the lowest species, there exist subordinate, or inferior, systems, distinct within themselves, yet attached, nevertheless, to the higher system, or systems, and the one universal whole. At the same time, classification cannot be absolutely perfect; because the division, or distinction, in nature is not absolutely perfect: the oneness, or continuity, of things is never entirely broken; they so touch at their confines, they are so shaded off into each other, that a precise line of demarcation can nowhere be drawn: and most of all, no single mode of classification can be sufficient, because things have many sides, many relations, many links of connexion: and classification, or division,

must be made on a variety of principles, according to the various aspects under which the whole may be viewed, and the diversity of ways in which the parts are connected between themselves. For the same thing considered from different points of view, may belong to one group or to another : and the same thing, considered with reference to the same other thing, may be a whole under one aspect, and a part under another. In a word, classification is natural and necessary, because things are *both* one and manifold : yet all classification must be imperfect, because things are *one* : and still more, any single mode of classification must be imperfect, because things are *manifold*.

The system of one manifold, requires, in addition to the universal classification of things, an universal *digest*, *collation*, and *codification* of things. Moreover, in accordance with the foregoing principles, it requires the utmost degree of synopsis, or conspectus ; and the greatest diversity of particular delineations—the most comprehensive outline, and the most complete filling up.

Again, the system of one manifold, must, to say the least, point attention to the need of a *systematic terminology*, and a revision of the *science of signs*. In philosophy, as in common life, the unsystematic use of language, even in the primary and most important terms, is a source of lamentable confusion.

Some term, for example, would be extremely useful for a general *science of earth*, of which a specific portion is now called *Geology* :—as there must be likewise a general science of man, or *Anthropology* ; and a general science of good, or *Agathology* ; including the whole good of all, and the particular good of every separate being.

It can scarcely be requisite to add, that the system of one manifold must have its applications to the whole subject of education ; regarded both as instruction and as training ;

to the education of the individual, and to the progressive education of the species ; to the formation of national and of individual character. It must involve its own method of contemplating and teaching : since all things must be *contemplated* and *taught* as one manifold. This single application of the principle,—the conjunction of unity and variety, of simultaneity and separation, in the great work of education—of gathering up into one view the whole in all its aspects, and distributing it into its several parts or divisions—is a subject which might well demand a volume for itself ; or rather, which might fill many volumes. I would here only observe, that it is an application which should have reference to all grades and conditions of social existence, from the youthful prince, who will one day, as we trust, continue in his own person the British monarchy, to the child of the poorest peasant or mechanic in the land.

A similar remark might be made with respect to the immense subject of *organization*, to which the system of one manifold has an evident and most appropriate applicability ;—as, to organization, national as well as departmental ; international as well as national ; to the *organization of society*, with the different provinces of men and women ; the *organization of labour* ; the *organization of charity or beneficence* ; the *organization of the State* ; of the *Church* ; of *corporations and companies* ; of *central and local government* ; and the relations of these with each other, and with individuals. For, there is an action of the whole, as well as a science of the whole. And of this whole of action there must be distribution and arrangement, as of the whole of science. Organization is practical classification ; as classification is speculative organization ; or classification belongs rather to things, and organization rather to persons ; though even the distinction between things and persons follows the common rule ; and, while real and necessary, is not absolute and com-

plete ; so that they also must be regarded in conjunction as well as apart.

A peculiar application might be made to the vexed question of co-operation and competition : or, again, to the intricate question of voluntary associations, considered in their number and objects ; their general and their respective character ; their connexion with the other forms of modern civilization, and their internal distribution among themselves. I do not of course say, that the doctrine of system can determine these questions ; but it may shed a strong light upon them, and at least ensure their comprehensive and methodical treatment.

In short, the application of system must comprise the contemplation or knowledge of things ; the working of things ; the representation or exhibition of things ; or, in other words, the special, yet ever associated, functions of the discoverer, the doer, and the describer : it must comprise a systematic conception of the abstractedly right or possible ; and a systematic view of the actual, with a regular plan of reports and registrations, having both unity and variety : it must also comprise the adaptation of these things, either to other ; for they also are one, as well as manifold, connected as well as distinct.

It would be easy to enumerate other applications ; as to colonization ; to the distribution of the population and productions of the globe ; or, universally, to the development and employment of means and resources. But these instances are sufficient in the way of suggestion ; and suggestion is all that is required for the present purpose, or that would be consistent with the proper limits of this statement.

3. The same sort of suggestion is all that will now be attempted in coming to the third point ; namely, the value and necessity of system to mankind, together with which certain objections must come under review.

This value and this necessity depend upon considerations, both general and special; upon those inherent in the immutable constitution of men and things, and those appertaining to the advances of civilization, the tendencies of society, the history and progress of mankind, so far as system is concerned.

The former set of these considerations will shew us, that system is always necessary and useful for mankind :

A. From the constitution of the objective world, or world of external existences; which is, strictly, one manifold:—from the constitution of the subjective world, or inner world of mind, which is, strictly, one manifold:—and from the marvellous association and harmony between these two; so that they also are, in reality, one manifold :

B. From the whole nature of man, on which variety in unity is the pervading impress; and from his peculiar position in the universe, which so wonderfully connects him with the whole system of space and time. For, among the inhabitants of this earth, man alone seems to possess that faculty of generalization on which system rests: man alone has those great prerogatives,—combination of action among men of the same period, and continuity of action from generation to generation,—with which system is interwoven, and which man flings away, as he flings away system. This capacity for system is, in fact, his compensation for the littleness of his powers, and the shortness of his present existence. The inferior animals have not the same capacity for system: superior intelligences, such as we conceive angels to be, have not the same need of it; for each angelic being is more sufficient to himself; and among immortal beings, we cannot suppose any succession of generations. System specially belongs to man, as man: to his actual life, and to his peculiar place in the scale of creation :

C. From his relation, therefore, to the universe. For man cannot create any thing ; he cannot annihilate any thing ; he cannot really change the nature of any thing. His true business is to systematize :—that is, to obtain a systematic knowledge of things, with a view to a systematic action upon them : systematically to unfold, adjust, and exert his own faculties and resources ; systematically to develope, collocate, and employ the materials at his disposal :

D. From the circumstance, that as system is, properly, the vocation of man, so it is, still more properly, the vocation of the Christian man : or, in other words, from the structure of the Christian Scripture, which has its own variety in unity :—from the scheme of the Christian faith, the economy of the Christian Church, the whole distinctive character of the Christian religion.

Again : as system is, generally, the necessity of man, so it has become, specially, the necessity of the age.

Here, the most impressive demonstration would be a full portraiture of the evils which result from the absence, or deficiency, of system, in whatever degree that absence, or deficiency, exists. The majority of men have lived always, and they live still, without system, in the true sense of the word. They live without a real concert with each other, or a real harmony, or arrangement, of their individual being. They live at hazard and at random, loosely and without rule. Their life slides away from them, vague, desultory, incoherent, aimless, purposeless. They have insulation without right partition ; confusion, or entanglement, without right combination. The amount of disorder and mischief arising from this cause has been at all times great : if left without check or counter-action, it must be greater in this age, than in preceding ages ; and it will be even greater in future ages than in the present :—for it must inevitably increase with the mere increase of the earth's population, of the multitude of competitions

and rivalries, of the struggles and entanglements of political and social life, of the crush and complication of all human interests.

By a providential dispensation, however, there subsists with this ever-growing necessity for system, an over-growing tendency towards it, and an ever-growing possibility of, to a certain extent, attaining it. Indeed, the necessity, and the possibility, would almost seem to advance with the same rate of progression.

The sources of this tendency and this possibility have been already mentioned in that portion of these remarks, where an attempt was made to prove that man is approaching the constructive æra of society. In the infancy of the race, as of the individual, man is more a separate being, and fixes his attention more upon particular objects. Yet, even then, he forms a kind of incipient system with his own few ideas; and with his own family, his clan, his tribe. In the lapse of time, as new wants and new associations arise, other systems are framed; but still they are most defective and confined, opposing country to country, and mistaking parts for wholes. By degrees, however, as there comes more of enlightenment, more of mechanical and locomotive power, and a more constant interchange of opinions, men expand their sphere of thought and action; and yet are drawn more closely together: at least some prejudices and some hostilities gradually give way: design becomes wider and more apparent in human concerns: and the scheme of existence, while it is divided into more numerous sections, spreads more and more into universality. The natural and necessary course of things is from what may almost be called no system to partial system; and from partial system to universal. That such is really the case might be shewn by the philosophical *à priori* argument, by the historical argument of facts and events, and by the religious, or Christian argument; and these concurrent

evidences, as they make manifest the necessity and feasibility of system, make manifest also its value.

At any rate, the truth is demonstrable, that the formation of system must bring immense benefits along with it.

Its general benefits are conspicuous. For system must be the most effective instrument in discovering and maintaining the true *equilibrium* of the world; and in finding for all persons and things their rightful part, place, and province; in fitting agents to employments, and employments to agents; in providing that every work shall be done once and completely by the most appropriate and competent doers—not many times in many quarters partially, imperfectly, irregularly; in preventing that enormous waste, or misdirection, which is still deplorably visible, of labour and skill, of physical and material force, of moral and mental energy; and in furnishing that two-fold *desideratum* of inestimable price;—the *maximum* of power, and the *optimum* of its application.

On the supposition of *universal* system, these benefits, it is obvious, belong to all spheres and departments of political and social, public and private life.

A glance has already been given at the connexion of system with the formation of human character. It manifestly tends to the symmetry of the whole man; to the full and harmonious development, the joint and several use, of all his properties, qualifications, and capabilities; to the perfection of his entire being, so far as perfection is attainable.

In descending from the unity of man's being to the various portions, it is still attended by its retinue of benefits.

Let us observe its intellectual uses, for instance. It is not too much to say, that the system of one manifold, objective and subjective, is the true *organon* of knowledge to mankind: for it consists in the adjusted application of all the mental powers to the adjusted study and disposition of all the objects of knowledge, with the adjusted use of all

signs, as vehicles and as instruments of thought. It will promote and subserve whatever men can do, collectively, in arriving at truth; in obtaining, publishing, circulating information: and, as to the individual man, it will help to bring out, to invigorate, and to facilitate the perceptive, or cognitive, faculty; the faculty of judging, the faculty of reasoning, the faculty of remembering: and, moreover, it may render the utmost service in improving knowledge into wisdom; in reducing it to its unity, and thus preventing its stores, however multifarious, from becoming an incumbrance or a mischief: in causing the researches and capacities of the mind to be at once concentrated without being confined, and expanded without being dispersed or dissipated. Moreover, when objectively considered, the system of one manifold is the great clue to the interpretation of the volume of nature; the great key to the cypher in which it is written. It combines, or rather constitutes, the great induction and the great deduction of the universe.

Generally, too, the true notion of system strikes at the root of those errors and those strifes of opinion—by far the gravest and most numerous of all,—which proceed from narrow and partial views, from taking only one side or aspect of a subject, and omitting or even scornfully rejecting those other sides or aspects, that are, nevertheless, real and essential items in the sum, of which the truth, that is, the whole truth, is made up. But it is as yet difficult to calculate how beneficial a power the formation of system might, in many ways, exert, with regard to the discovery of truth, and the adjustment of the diversities of human opinion.

Let us observe its moral uses. It must, obviously, and in the highest degree, aid the true moral regulation of the life and being; the great work of self-government, self-culture, and self-discipline; and it is the main secret of moderation, or measure in all things. Again, how beneficial must

be its influence, as it tends to form a whole scheme, or science of duty. For, now, how many duties are unfulfilled, simply because the relations, which involve them, are not understood ! How many acts of duty does man fail to perform, simply because he has not been taught to recognize as belonging to him, such, or such, a sphere of action ! He has had no system of duty.

The consideration, too, although we must recur to it, may be here just hinted, how the moral significance and importance of every word or action will be best learnt from the conception of a vast continuous system, in which all influences all, and every thing stretches out into infinity ; in which the first word that was ever spoken still floats upon the air, and the slightest action, or movement, has its effect for ever on the whole of existences.

Yet further : it will be found impossible to separate system from *right*, the want of system from *wrong*. There exists a necessary connexion, as in the ideas, so almost in the very terms.

This, at least, is certain. System and *good*, want of system and *evil*, are allied and akin. We cannot systematize evil : at least, we cannot weave it into a large and general system. Evil is essentially a thing of impulse, passion, and violence ; of disorder, derangement, and disproportion. It is also, essentially, narrow and short-sighted. It will not admit of comprehensive deliberation, of connected thought, of nice arrangement, of steady forecast : of being put into just shape, consistency, and coherence. These things belong to good, and not to evil ; to good in its unity ; and the various kinds, or constituents, of good—right, truth, beauty, happiness,—have an affinity with system, which can never be dissolved.

Every man will be wiser, better, and very much happier, as he cherishes in himself the spirit of system, and strives to exhibit it in all the departments of his existence ; and as this

spirit is cherished and exhibited, the world at large will have its happiness immeasurably increased by the increased wisdom and goodness of its inhabitants.

This section of the inquiry must be closed by just touching upon the uses of system in its bearings upon religion. Its religious are its noblest uses.

As we endeavour to stretch our thoughts over the boundless aggregate of being—that infinite variety bound together by connecting principles and laws—one primary and pervading fact must force itself upon our convictions. This is, that there exists an immense system, of which the system of earth and man is a part infinitesimally small: that there is a *superhuman* system, on which the *human* entirely depends; to which the human must be subordinated and accommodated; and which affords a pattern for the human in the laws, principles, and analogies which it presents.

So much will be generally acknowledged, even by the atheist, who can ascribe the existence of this universal system to blind chance, or to mechanical necessity. Even he must acknowledge this system to be superhuman, and to depend upon some agency which is superhuman; since he knows that man is not, in reality, the supreme lord and ruler even on that globe which he claims for his inheritance; that he cannot alter any one of its main features; and that, if the sun, for instance, were extinguished, or but for a short time removed, the entire system of man and earth would be frozen up.

But, the due consideration of system itself, and of this vast superhuman system,—this system of order, of design, of intelligent action, of moral purpose,—should lead to the belief, that it requires a divine Conceiver, a divine Framer, a divine Regulator; and, therefore, that it is itself divine.

Irreligion is almost always the offspring of waywardness, inconsiderateness, the want of large observation, or deep

serious reflection. All comprehensive, connected, systematic thought, carries man up to religion : and he lives in an atmosphere of religion, just as he feels himself to live in the presence of an infinite system, to which he must conform his own. If he only strives to put his human system in harmony with the superhuman, he will not be far from some religion.

He will hardly be far from the religion of Jesus Christ. At least, between system and Christianity there will be found, as has been already suggested, many ties. A view of system teaches us, like the Gospel, both the intimate connexion between the social and the individual existence of man, with the impossibility of improving the one without improving the other ; and, likewise, the intimate connexion between all the parts of duration, between the present life, and the past and future eternity ; it teaches us also to take, so far as we can, all agencies into account ; and, therefore, at least urges upon man the solemn consideration, whether, or not, immortal spiritual agencies are at work upon him, have any real existence or operation in regard to him. The ethics of system will aid the ethics of the Gospel in blending the human race into one family ; in restraining pride, anger, uncharitableness, and introducing love, meekness, forbearance, peaceableness, amity, courtesy, from the mere sense of mutual dependence : the unity of system leads to the unity of its author as a self-evident truth ; while the one manifold of system is supported by most striking citations from the Old and from the New Testament ; and may help us forward, in its turn, to the profounder and sublimer doctrines, respecting the modes of the Divine Being, and the wonderful union between the human and divine natures, which remain, however, inscrutable mysteries, and around which the curtain of darkness is drawn.

But certain objections have been, or may be urged, which would deny, either expressly or virtually, either wholly or in

part, the value of system to mankind. It would be uncandid not to take some slight notice of such objections in this place.

SOME of them, however, have been answered by anticipation: — the objection, for instance, that system is mere theory: — whereas the system of one manifold is a constant attestation, that theory and practice cannot be divorced: or, again, the objection, that system is a fixed, inflexible, unelastic thing, unsusceptible of modification or progress; whereas a system, which, in reference to duration, as in reference to space, is a system of one manifold, is also, from its very nature, one of advancement, of development, ever flowing and widening with the stream of time.

Development and progress, it is needless to add, must belong more to the intelligent and moral, than to the physical and mechanical departments, of an universal system. Yet, even as to these latter, a distinguished writer, Mrs. Somerville, has said, that “stupendous changes may be but cycles in those great laws of the universe, where all is variable but the laws themselves and He who has ordained them.”

Still, system can be regarded as a mere frame-work; a dull, rigid, monotonous uniformity; it can be regarded as cold, dead, spiritless, irrespective of holy ends, uncongenial with warm sympathies and inspiring principles; it can even be regarded as untrue to nature; inasmuch as nature, we may be told, in its exhaustless varieties of loveliness and grandeur, is not thus stiff and prim; is not thus crystallized and stereotyped into a hard array of formalities: the world is “harmoniously confused;” its substances are not sorted, parcelled out, and labelled, like the goods in a warehouse; whereas system is always cutting and dividing things into set portions and shapes: it would, therefore, strike out of the world all the images of beauty, all the grace and poetry of life: it would allow no liberty, or ease, or choice, to individual

volitions; it would pay no attention to the idiosyncrasies of man; the differences of taste, temperament, natural constitution, or incidental circumstances; but would make the whole of existence run, as it were, in one groove.

The true reply to this sort of compound objection is, that it arises from repudiating, or overlooking, that juster idea of system, which some pains have been taken to set forth. System, it must be remembered, is, in its right acceptation, not cramped and narrow, but broad and universal; and, as being a system of one manifold, it not only admits, but requires, much of diversity and latitude amidst the unity of its essential and eternal laws. It would not neglect any principles; and, assuredly, not those which are the loftiest and most animating: for it requires all to be included, that none may be exaggerated; and would always assign to all their due rank and importance. The system, too, of human formation must correspond with the real system of the universe; where all things are blended together, and yet are also arranged into groups and classes, so as to harmonize with our mental, or subjective, tendencies to classification and arrangement. Such a system must minister to the ethical, the æsthetical, and the imaginative, as well as to the logical, part of man: to the love and feeling of the picturesque, as well as to the exacter demands of scientific thought; to those hours, when man would give himself calmly up to the passive reception of influences, as well as to those, when he would put forth the energetic activity of his powers: for, to the true system of man, there belongs spontaneity as well as subordination; relaxation as well as tension; just as rest is no less indispensable than exercise, or sleep than food. Systematic unity is not mere uniformity; nor can monotony ever be a real characteristic of any large system:—for, to employ the most familiar instances, system, as applied to the construction of a house or public building, will be other and

strieter than system, as applied to the laying out of grounds; system may be found in the tree stretching forth its boughs in the forest, as much as in a tree, at once formal and fantastic, clipped into the shape of beast or bird; and in the more free and natural style of a landscape-garden, as much as in the trimness of a Dutch parterre. In short, such objections as these fall away of themselves, as the true idea of system is stamped upon the mind; that system which, in its complex unity, would afford to the intrinsic attributes and properties of each several thing, or person, the very fullest development, which is compatible with the well-being of the wider assemblage of things and persons.

A system of mere variety could not exist; because the first element, or condition, of system is unity; and, without it, all must be loose and disjointed, like the scattered parts of a machine taken to pieces. A system of absolute unity would resemble that polity of ancient Sparta, where private life was almost absorbed and swallowed up in the life of the state. A system of variety in unity, or one manifold, is that, where neither the community is sacrificed to the individual, nor the individual to the community:—where there is reciprocal dependence without the forfeiture of personal volition or freedom; and where every human being is both a wheel, or spring, in an immense engine, or series of engines; and himself, also, a whole complicated engine, having its own arrangement of wheels and springs in its own internal and wondrous mechanism;—so that a system of one manifold must be an additional instrument for securing to every one the largest portion of natural freedom consistent with the organization of society, “and of reconciling, in the highest possible degree, the several advantages of man’s individual and his civil condition.”—But it may be objected, that the formation of system, such as it has been shadowed forth, is as yet altogether premature: and that it belongs, if it can

ever become possible, to some distant stage of civilization, some unapproached condition of human life, now lying hid in the dimness of futurity. A few suggestions have been already offered on this topic : and we may again encounter it, as we proceed. Here, therefore, I would merely observe, that, although it must indeed be premature to think of the consummation of a system, which embraces the whole of human beings and human interests, it can scarcely be too soon to attempt to lay its foundations, to establish, or at least discuss, the principles which must lie at its base.

But a contrary objection may be taken. It may be thought, that all which has been now propounded, is either done, or in the course of being done. The complete reply to this objection could only be found in an examination, at once historical and critical, at once wide and minute, of the actual state of the world. The position, here assumed, has been, that, from the natural and inevitable tendency of things, the world is growing and coalescing, more and more, into a systematic unity : but that any patient and accurate observer must still perceive a sad defectiveness of system, in its science, and still more, in its modes of action,—in its arrangements public and domestic, ecclesiastical and civil. I am firmly persuaded, that no retrograde movement can now take place in civilization ; “that the diffusion of Christian virtues and of knowledge, even more than of the mechanical arts, ensures the steady advancement of man in those high moral and intellectual qualities that constitute his true dignity :” but I am persuaded also, that a great effort is required, not merely to increase his rate of progress, but even, in many respects, to set his footsteps in the right path, and lead them uniformly in the proper direction.

But it may be urged, further, that an attempt at the formation of wide and universal system would, if it has any results, be revolutionary ; and revolutionary in the bad sense ;

because it would unsettle what it could not restore, and thus be productive of subversion and disarrangement, not of harmony and good order. The answer is, that true and wide system can, in this sense, never be revolutionary: for its aim is to adopt and adapt, to combine and carry forward, much more than to innovate. It would take the actual, as an adjunct and counterpoise to the ideal: and, therefore, as a large, important, and indispensable element in all its calculations. It would, moreover, always respect existing institutions and customs, even because they exist; and because, although they may have come from casual growth, rather than from preconcerted design, yet they could not have been effects without causes, nor have arisen without some foundation in the nature or necessity of things. And besides:—subversion and derangement usually proceed from not consulting the fitness and congruity of an entire constitution, but making in some one portion of it unadvised changes, which will not agree with the remaining portions. System is the opposite of this rashness and violence. For its very essence is to look at a whole scheme of arrangements at once, and never even to precipitate any part so much in advance, as to be out of character and consistency with the rest. System is at least irreconcilable with dismemberment.

But the great objection remains, that such an attempt can lead to *no* results: for that it is altogether chimerical and impracticable.—The thing proposed, it may be stated, is an universal system of one manifold. But the formation of such a system demands an universal concurrence. There must be an union of all agents, in the prosecution of the whole work, and for the attainment of the one common end. There must be also the right action of particular persons, or agents, for the attainment of each particular end. Moreover, all things must be taken; because every thing affects the whole. And all things must be taken in all

lights, and in all their connexions ; both together and apart, both in their greatest combination and in their greatest division. There must be required, then, an universal, complete acquaintance with things, and an universal, complete command of them ; in other words, omniscience and omnipotence. But these are attributes which belong not to man, but to God. Who dares to imagine that such conditions can ever be satisfied ? Who can dream that this world shall ever see the realization of this idea ?

Now, without doubt, it is a formidable objection, that an entire scheme is a plain and even presumptuous impracticability. If it were entirely true, it would be altogether fatal. But as some evidence, that it cannot be entirely true, that it has only a show, or portion, of truth, we may refer to that brief sketch of man's natural position, and his social progress, which has just been given. Nevertheless, if we ought not to neglect those objections, or even cavils, which spring mainly from misapprehension, still less should we conceal, or disguise, the seriousness and the magnitude of those difficulties and obstacles which the reality of the matter involves. It is, moreover, beyond question, that we are bound to take into account, not only the nature and extent of system, abstractedly considered ; but also the nature and limits of human capacity in the formation of system : not only what a thing is in itself ; but what it is in respect to us. What can we know ? what can we do ? There are some few things, perhaps, which we imagine ourselves to understand : yet we see not any one thing that has not secrets which it withholds from us ; and of other things, magnificent and countless, we catch but the faintest glimpse : and when we have advanced to the very verge of our horizon, there lies an immensity beyond, which we cannot pierce at all : and when we proceed to act upon what we behold, we are compelled at every step to feel our utter feebleness, and are tied down

by a hundred conditions, which we have not made, and which we cannot annul or escape. Thus, the capacities of mankind are circumscribed within narrow boundaries as to their knowledge; and within boundaries yet narrower as to their powers of action. The capacities of the race are limited; and limited in a much stricter degree are the capacities of the individual. If the world were but an inert uniform mass of homogeneous parts indefinitely divisible, unspeakably arduous would be the task of arranging and systematizing it, as a mere problem of number and quantity. But when, instead of being uniform and homogeneous, it spreads out its various substances, with all their innumerable diversity of properties, modes, relations, this arduousness is increased a thousand-fold; and a thousand-fold again is it increased, as we think of all these substances working and interworking with each other, in a perpetual state of flux, movement, and change. But further, as we rise to organic life, and not merely to organic life, but to conscious, reasonable, moral life: as we rise to the myriads of intelligences, or minds, each within itself a new universe of thoughts and imaginations, and to the myriads of wills, each a new centre of action, and, therefore, a new centre, potentially at least, of disturbance and derangement to all other action; then we indeed stand in the midst of difficulties, which it is impossible to overrate, and, perhaps, impossible even to conceive. But is the survey of system, or the desire to form it, therefore, useless, or without profit? I believe that the lessons of humility which we must learn from a sense of our insufficiency and weakness, is at least as valuable as any lesson of energy which we can learn from a sense of our powers, or of our wants. We are taught to feel, how the finite must shrink into nothingness before the face of the Infinite; and to bow down in reverential admiration at the footstool of the majesty of that Being who is the supreme disposer of all things, and who will not, we are assured, put

out of His own hands into ours the reins of universal dominion.

At the same time, when these considerations have been fairly weighed, our legitimate conclusion is, that the seal of imperfection must always rest on all that man is, or does ;—not that we are to remain slothful and quiescent under ills, which we can mitigate, because the utmost improvements which we can effect in this initiatory stage of being will not at last change it from what God has designed it to be.

Still, again, however, the difficulties are enhanced ; because, in the construction of system, we have not a clear space, on which to build : but are embarrassed by many existing fabrics, which ought not to remain, yet which cannot be touched without great peril. We must have oftentimes to contend with accumulations of error, which have been invested by age with a kind of sacredness : or with a state of things where good and evil are so intermingled, that we cannot remove the one, without shaking or endangering the other. We must have oftentimes to contend with ignorance, prejudice, perverseness, jealousies, estrangements, the obstinate adherence to effete and expiring forms, or the ambitious thirst for novelties which may confer notoriety ; in a word, as with our own frailties, passions, and vices, so with the frailties, passions, and vices of other men.

But what then ? the questions must still recur ; Is system, or is it not, a necessity to mankind ; and what is the true theory, or *rationale*, of system ? If these questions have here been rightly viewed, difficulties should rather stimulate than deter us, unless they be absolutely and hopelessly insurmountable. Few operations are more common among mankind, or more mischievous, than the making of impossibilities out of difficulties. But it must be proved that we are struggling with a matter, where the resistance is altogether too strong

for us, or where the thing sought must elude our grasp,—that we are indeed beating either the rock or the air:—for otherwise, the very difficulties which will attend the formation of system, when taken in conjunction with the value and advantages of system, only lead us on to the other topic here proposed for examination:—namely, what are our obligations in respect to it; and what is the actual mode of proceeding to be adopted.

4. I would treat this portion of the argument with especial reference to that other portion, in which the *applications* of system have been considered; and I would also endeavour to follow up in it the connexion which exists between the idea of system on the one hand, and our moral convictions and emotions on the other. For it is important to observe, that, as the idea of system brings us, generally, to a scheme of duty, so a scheme of duty must involve obligations with regard to system itself.

These obligations, I would assert, are real, positive, imperative. The *cardinal duty*, I would assert, of every rational and moral being is to take his part in that vast system to which he is attached, and in all the spheres, or smaller systems, which, as it were, are folded up in it. As he proceeds from the inner to the outer of these concentric rings, the lines which mark the circles will grow gradually fainter until they become almost indistinguishable; but so far as such expansion is possible, his thoughts and sympathies must go with him to the furthest circumference. For of this vast system he is a component fraction: and the largest combination of this globe's inhabitants, with this great globe itself, can be nothing more than fractions: while in another sense, as has been seen, he is a whole in himself, quite as much as they can be wholes. And thus his entire existence has a meaning for him: there is revealed to him the true greatness of his

destiny, the true scope and bearing of all his actions, even together with an overwhelming conviction of his personal insignificance. For to whom does this vast system belong ? It belongs to him, as he to it. It belongs to all and to each. It belongs to the poorest, the lowliest, the obscurest of the children of men. Well may there dwell upon him a mysterious sense of the omnipresence of every thing ; — a profound and almost terrible sense that all which he says, or does, runs, and is felt, along every fibre of the universe. Everywhere he finds relations, everywhere duties ; or one vast duty, in which all other duties are comprised. And what is that one duty ; so one, so manifold ? It is the duty, I reiterate, of taking his part in the universal system to which he is attached. In this mighty drama he has some part to enact : and the manner in which he enacts it has an influence upon all its interests and all its events.

Our life—the life of any man, the collective life of mankind,—is like a game at chess ; where each single move of each single piece has an effect upon the fortune of all the pieces, and the result of the whole game. The real difference is, whether the moves shall be made, as a child might make them, unconnectedly and at random ; or with foresight, with concert, upon some continuous plan, with some view or reference to this whole result. Thus every man, and every man's every movement, are implicated in the entire scheme of existence ; and here, the real difference is, whether he shall be merely a blind, unconscious, unintelligent instrument, or a conscious, intelligent, moral participator : whether he shall act the part of a mere machine, or of a brute headlong unreasoning animal, or the part of a rational, spiritual, immortal MAN. It seems to me, that the great idea of system, when understood and appreciated, helps to confer upon him his real elevation, no less than to teach him his real duty. As some countries are raised above the

rest, just as they are included, and make themselves felt, in the general confederacy, or system, of earth's civilization ; while those are, of necessity, the lowest, rudest, least enlightened, and most barbarous, which are left out of its pale ; so is the individual man more exalted than he would otherwise be, just in proportion as, endued with a wise and comprehensive energy, he incorporates himself with the great unity of all things, and not only studies the laws which bind it together, but feels himself to have a share in it, seeks to improve it, and would rejoice to stamp some impress of himself upon the connected order of being with which he is intertwined. As the idea of system grows and fixes itself upon him, he sees the world with new eyes, and walks through it with a more solemn feeling of his varied responsibilities ; and this intenser feeling of his varied responsibilities induces him, in its turn, to think and act more upon system.

After all, something, nay much, does lie in the power of individuals, and a great duty does rest upon them ; and with individuals we must begin. We talk of difficulties, and with justice. Yet, in the formation of a human system, as subordinated to the divine, the impediments, though grave, are not insuperable : for they reside, not so much in the nature of things, or in the ordinations of God's providence, as in a want of knowledge among individual men, which is, in some measure at least, removeable ; or, in a want of inclination, which they, themselves, should labour to remove.

Let individuals do what they can, and the work is already more than half accomplished.

But on the supposition that men would confront the difficulties instead of being disheartened by them ; and that they would seriously strive to construct a general system, so far as they have ability ; then, since the whole consummation, which may be ultimately possible, cannot be immediately attained, and, as yet, can scarcely be in prospect, what are

the first steps to be taken, what should be the actual mode, or order, of proceeding ?

Upon the first step of all, we have already been insisting at some length. It is no other than a true conception of system, as it subsists in itself, or as it is exhibited to us in the resemblances and diversities, the affinities and distinctions, the composite simplicity, the multiform unity, of this majestic and beautiful creation. Man must have a system of thought ; and, indeed, all real thought is system. The idea of system must impart breadth, consistency, and harmony, to all his contemplations.

The next step,—and it is quite a practicable step,—is really to *put his own life upon system*. He must be at harmony with himself ; he must consult his whole nature, affording room for its passive, as well as its active elements, for meditation, solitude, self-concentration, self-communion, as well as for the occupations of the world. He must make it his great business rightly to discern and estimate what his whole life, his whole being is. He must examine whether, or not, it is indeed bounded by the cradle and the sepulchre ; or is destined for an indefinite expansion in an immortal futurity ; he must examine what he knows, or can know, and what are the sources of his knowledge ; what he may hope, or expect, and what are the grounds of his hopes and expectations. He will then be enabled, and he ought, to systematize the distribution of his faculties, his time, his money, and of all that appertains to him. He can also proceed to systematize his relations ; that is, according to the preceding exposition, he can take their entire scheme : he can at least recognize the truth that he must attend to his human relations in all their spheres. As he puts his personal life upon system, so he can also put upon system his domestic life, and his relations with his family ; his relations professional or industrial, as employer or employed ; his relations as a mem-

ber of a local community, or several local communities, civil or ecclesiastical; as a citizen of the state, as a member of the Church at large, as a member of the human race. He can pay regard to all these relations in their connected interdependent unity, as well as when considered by themselves.

But he cannot stop here in the one manifold of his relations. He may, and he must inquire, if he means to put his life upon system, whether, or not, he has a relation with a Supreme Intelligence, a Divine Moral Ruler: whether, or not, this relation is as real, as necessary, as important,—yet to say but this, is to say nothing,—as any which he has, or can have, with his fellow-men. In short, the first step, after a due conception of system, is the real adoption of system, as to *one's self*.

In the next place, education, or at least instruction, may be systematized. It may sound as an extravagant assertion, yet I believe it to be a correct one, that every child—or rather every person who receives education,—should take what Lord Bacon took, namely, “the whole of knowledge for his province.” I do not, of course, mean that he can pursue it all into the infinity of its details; but he can obtain a *conspectus*,—so to speak—of those large general principles which gather it into one, and form its apex. He may be instructed to observe the unity of knowledge, the unity of truth, as well as its varieties. As his views must be wrong and out of proportion, if he would regard the geography of a single country, altogether without reference to the entire geography of the globe, or any particular history without reference to universal; so, still more, must they be wrong, and out of proportion, unless, generally, he has a scheme of knowledge, a correct outline of the whole, and is taught to see the parts with reference to that whole and to each other. Gradually, and as his faculties find their development, he

must be led up to this whole, and down from it:—it must be kept always in view: and then there will be profit without risk, to whatever extent he may afterwards divide and analyze, as well as combine and trace connexions. He can safely choose the particular subjects which he shall specially investigate, and the portions of the scheme to which he shall devote himself throughout life, when he has noted, in the first instance, their relative size and position, and their interdependence with the other portions and subjects. But the largest multiplicity of loose miscellaneous information will never train his understanding aright, without this great fontal and central idea.

The very terms suggest, that all Universities should have professorships of the Universal; in every place of general education some teacher should be appointed, who should apply himself to the connected whole of knowledge, and act in concert with others, who should give instruction in its several branches: and I conceive that no place of education can deserve the name, which does not regard as the foremost of all sciences, the science of one manifold.

A scheme of knowledge cannot, of course, be quite disconnected from the scheme of action. It follows, then, that another and most useful measure might be adopted, if the rulers in the State and in the Church, the Directors of public bodies, Associations, and Institutions, the heads of Universities and other large establishments, and all, in fact, in their respective stations, would render assistance to that *systematic view of the Actual*, which I have already mentioned as likely to be of very material aid to the attainment of the ultimate, and the just conception of the Possible or the Ideal. There seems good reason to recommend, that not only societies, but municipal and other bodies, should have their several reports: that the main substance of these should be drafted and gathered into some one general report: and so, at length,

that there should be an entire and comprehensive digest methodically made.

Every association owes a report of itself to its members : every state, or local government, owes a report of itself to the nation, or to the locality : the report of what is done has always a tendency to correct and complete what is done : thus, the action, as well as the record, of smaller communities might be improved : the improvement might spread on to the larger communities ; and, although mankind are far indeed, as yet, from being knit into a brotherhood, still, the existence of international law, the attempts at international copyright, international leagues for different purposes, synchrous observations, as, for instance, astronomical and meteorological, made, in concert, in different countries, and under the sanction of different governments,—these, and many other signs, give some promise of the eventual realization of a federal unity, with which an almost infinite variety of independent action, national, departmental, and private, would be perfectly consistent and congenial.

I have set forth these particulars, at the risk of some repetition, with the view of showing, that, *if a just conception of system be once entertained*, the formation of it, instead of being a vision, may proceed step by step ; and is already, in many respects, within the compass of almost immediate practicability. But I would render the matter still more clear.

III. I come, then, to the third division, that was to be appended to this Letter, for the sake of offering some explanatory remarks, which could not conveniently be placed under either of the foregoing heads. These explanations will be, in part, general ; in part, special and local.

1. The general explanations may serve, in addition to some other uses, partly for an elucidation, and partly for

a retrospect, of those portions of the inquiry, which it seems more peculiarly desirable to impress upon the public mind.

The whole is stated to be an *introductory argument* : and such is strictly its character. For its object is to clear the ground for future inquiries and operations :—in some respects, a dull and uninteresting labour; yet more useful, perhaps, than an attempt to raise a showy and imposing fabric, before the necessary preparations have been made, and the necessary materials collected.

In a subject so vast as system, and comprising in its unity so many considerations, three matters stand out in strong relief.

The first of these is the conception of system, including the meaning of the term, the nature and extent of the thing, together with the prerequisites, or primary conditions essential to its formation.

The second is the careful examination of those existences in the universe, whether persons or things, of which system is really to consist; and of the manner in which the theory of system is to be applied to them in their separate being, or in their combinations: in other words, a comprehensive view, not of speculative system, but of *actual systematization*.

The third is, *systematization itself*: not the view of it, but the process of it; the setting in motion of divers agencies and instruments for its attainment; its living construction and realization in the world of humanity.

Now the present argument has addressed itself, almost entirely, to the first of these matters: the observations, or suggestions, which have gone beyond it, have been for the purpose of rendering the conception of system more exact, the exposition of it less liable to misapprehension; and also of removing certain objections and impediments, which might otherwise lie in the way of all further progress.

To prevent this statement from swelling into too large a bulk, the many authorities, ancient and modern, which might easily be adduced, have been, for the present at least, omitted. Both redundancies and deficiencies may probably be found in it, as it stands: but it is, I hope, intelligible, and, as to its outline, even complete: though it must be afterwards worked out with a more particular and minute elaboration; and though absolute completeness is hardly possible, in an extensive and, in some respects, a new field of inquiry.

Yet, in using the word "new," I would wish to avoid the imputation of putting forth inordinate and unfounded pretensions. There can be nothing new in so trite a term as "system;" neither can there be any novelty in speaking of the universe as a connected whole; or of variety, or, at least, plurality, or multiformity, in unity, as constituting its chief law or type. This twofold truth has been recognized to a certain extent, and by more or fewer persons, almost from the first dawn of investigation and reflection. We may track its vestiges from the earliest days of Greek philosophy; we have some glimpses of it in a philosophy older than the Greek; it is embodied, as in the *Parmenides* and some other dialogues of Plato, so in the most recent lectures of the professors of every German university; and it may be specially discerned, among other instances, in the mode of writing history, which is now practised in Italy and France, as well as in Germany. Indeed, if, in any matter which depends, not upon nice and subtle experiments, but upon the observation of wide facts, patent to mankind from the beginning, any man should lay claim to perfect novelty, the very claim would afford a presumption against himself; against his good faith, or against the extent of his knowledge, or against the soundness of his understanding. If the claim were well-grounded, it would possess this very equivocal merit only by

the introduction of some error or intellectual heresy; but it probably will be very far from well-grounded, and thus prove a thorough want of acquaintance, on the part of the assertor, with the performances of other men and other ages, with the past and present state of human research. It is, in fact, scarcely within the compass of possibility, that any philosophical doctrine should be now altogether new. We live too late. And absolute novelty could, perhaps, hardly be predicated even of those speculations which have made illustrious the greatest names.

Still, a sense there is, in which almost every man who thinks for himself will have some novelty, or at least peculiarity, in his own views. Unless I believed that there was some novelty, or at least peculiarity, in that which is now proposed, I should not have intruded it upon public attention. But what is it? The world has not been wanting in universal theories, nobler perhaps and loftier, than our times can hope to emulate. It has been truly observed by F. Schlegel, that philosophy among the Greeks meant scientific investigation, universal in its scope, and not confined to any one purpose, or subject. Such, too, has been the philosophy of Bacon, of Leibnitz, of many other men, since the revival of letters. Again, the world has teemed with systems:—" *Systems of the World*," " *Systems of Nature*," have sprung up in abundance. Little would be gained by adding one more to their number. The peculiarity of the present attempt consists, I think, in this: that it takes, by itself, the idea of system as system, quite irrespective of any particular hypothesis, or law of connexion:—that it would separate, or eliminate from this idea all arbitrary or adventitious considerations; that it would then endeavour to unfold, and extract from this idea all the principles which lie involved in it; then use and apply it as a test and criterion of existing forms and institutions; and, finally, strive to reduce it to universal

practice, not as in an Utopia, or a new Atlantis, but with direct immediate reference to the world in which we live. It consists, as I conceive, in the endeavour to methodize and harmonize the entire range of human exertion, physical and moral, mental and mechanical; or, in other words, to construct a regular plan of investigation and action, upon the basis of a few elementary principles, which are either self-evident axioms, or conclusions so legitimately and strictly deduced from them, as to be propositions capable of rigorous demonstration, almost as much as any truths of geometrical science.

These elementary principles might, perhaps, be reduced to the two following :

(1.) The business of man is to examine what is, and to act in accordance with what is.

(2.) In examining what is, we find that the great fact of all being is the existence of a system of one manifold.

But, as the affectation of extreme precision might appear superfluous—to say the least,—in a publication of this kind, the statement may be thus made somewhat more at large.

The great law of the world is system.

The great want of the world is system.

For the future, the great work of the world must be the formation of system.

The necessity for system meets us in every phase, and in every department of existence.

The growing tendency towards it, and the comparative facilities afforded for its formation, are becoming not less apparent than its necessity.

There is a divine, or superhuman, system, which must be the model for the human.

In other words, there is a system which we have to construct; as there is a vaster system which we must study, and

to which we must conform ourselves : while the Divine Being, on His part, has in His wisdom and goodness determined, that the spontaneous agency of man shall be interwoven even with the immutable dispensations of His own overruling Providence.

In proof of this system, and for the preservation of it, correspondences, analogies, adaptations, exist between all the realms and provinces of the universe ;—more especially, between matter and mind, the world around us, and the world mirrored, contained, or formed within ourselves.

In speaking of the laws, analogies, or emblems, which render the superhuman system a guide or model for the system of man, we mean such as these, for example ;

The co-existence of centripetal and centrifugal forces, and the harmony produced by their reciprocal counteraction :

The mutual attraction of all things, and the strength of attraction varying in the inverse ratio of distance :

A two-fold movement,—as of the earth, in its rotation upon its own axis, and its revolution, together with other bodies, around a common centre, and as part of a common whole :—a principle, which extends, as we are taught to believe, immeasurably beyond our solar system ; and which everywhere represents the combination of the individual, or separate, with the sympathetic, or federal, principle.

The general law of totality and partition ; teaching us, that, as the whole is the sum of all its parts, or the result of the concurrent action of all its parts ; so, while nothing is to be interpolated which does not exist, nothing, which does exist, is to be omitted : that the whole will be rightly understood, and rightly treated, in proportion as all the parts which compose it are taken into account ; and the parts will be rightly understood and rightly treated, in proportion as we see the whole to which they belong, and their relation to the whole and to each other.

But, in truth, these laws, or principles, with several others, which will occur to almost every reader's own mind, resolve themselves at last, more or less directly, into the law, or principle, of one manifold.

These principles, too, are either self-evident, or are in the present state of science so universally acknowledged, that the youngest student has stored them in his memory; while Laplace can affirm them as readily as Newton, and Epicurus and Lucretius, if they were now alive, would admit them quite as much as the most religious of thinkers.

It would, however, be something worse than a false shame not to declare at once, what will be more fully set forth in another place, namely, that these principles may aid the sense of religion, and that the sense of religion may aid the force and efficacy of these principles. We who love to behold and trace, throughout the universe, not only system, but a living, vivifying, Almighty architect of system, must be more anxious to take a superhuman agency as the pattern for our own; while mindful of those immense differences which cannot now be examined, but which must always exist, between a being such as man, and a being of infinite intelligence and infinite power.

We shall be admonished more than others by the momentous truth, that all things throughout creation are doing their appointed work. In nature, we find no abstractions, no ideal generalizations; though these have their subjective usefulness, their subjective necessity. But, in nature, we trace the laws only in, and by, their operation. We do not perceive speculative and inert principles; but we learn the principles on which existences act and are moved, by the very movements and actions of those existences themselves. The law is only the expression for the general fact: and system itself comes to us as the great fact of all: "*le fait par excellence; le fait général et définitif.*"

We shall also be admonished more than others by the kindred truth, that the existences of nature, while each is performing its own proper functions, are all acting and working together. It is not merely that one thing is moving forward to one end, but that all things are moving forward concurrently to all ends ; and may be all made to move forward in conjunction to the one manifold end of universal well-being. How instructive, as how gratifying, is the consideration, that the Framer and Ruler of the world has made ample provision not only for all the wants and capacities of man, but for all these wants and capacities conjointly, as well as separately ; that the air which I must breathe, or die, also fills me with enjoyment ; that this corn-field, or this water, on which I gaze, ministers not only to my sustenance, but to my delight ; that this glorious assemblage of natural objects speaks at once to my eye, my ear, to all my senses ; and not only to my senses, but to my taste, my understanding, my imagination, my heart and soul ; that moral emotions of the purest and most exquisite kind may flow out of the view of external forms ; and that, as I behold earth and sky, with rapture and reverence, even that which is physical about me seems almost to become spiritualized by the beauties and harmonies of the material creation. Surely we should be taught even by our contemplation of nature to carry forward the great work of good, individual, social, sanitary, economical, educational, religious, connectedly and simultaneously : for that, while every part must receive a distinct attention, each part will be managed and conducted with more efficiency and even more ease, as other parts are managed and conducted along with it : that the maxim is true of things, as of persons, that each exists for all, and all for each : and that all must be taken to test and verify, to correct and balance, to aid and support, to adjust, improve, and strengthen all.

Therefore, in short, we must have system ; and this system

must be universal ; and by universal system we mean a system, where the idea of one manifold is made the foundation of all contemplation and all conduct : we mean the science and action of the whole and of all its parts ; so that all things shall be gathered up into their unity or totality, and then regularly distributed and subordinated into their minutest sub-divisions ; the same principle, ever and throughout, as in nature, preserving, ramifying, multiplying itself, with a constant repetition.

It is plain, therefore, that we do not mean by system a pedantic monotony, as if all life were to be arrayed with the rigid stiffness of a military drill : but we mean a system, which can wait, so to speak, upon the diversities as well as the agreements of the universe : which admits and even involves, great latitude, great multiformity, and infinite modifications consequent upon the lapse of time and the alteration of circumstances : which can adapt itself to the multiplicity of tastes, and the ever-shifting play of the imagination, as well as to the severe unity of the logical understanding : which delights in resemblances in the midst of differences, and differences in the midst of resemblances ; in sameness in the midst of change, and change in the midst of sameness ; in transition in the midst of continuity, and continuity in the midst of transition.

And so much might, perhaps, suffice by way of explanation. But my wish is, I confess, that these remarks should be recommendatory of system, as well as explanatory. I have offered them as an *argument* : I would fain offer them as an *appeal*. Would that they might go some way both to convince and to persuade !

For, believing, as I believe, that the greatest good which men could bestow on men, must be to set in order this disjointed frame of things, and help to put individual life

in harmony with nature, with itself, with the designs of God's providence ; believing, in other words, that system—a system of constant principles, mingled, however, in various and even variable proportions,—is the *supreme* object, which mankind have to place before themselves, in the present stage of human progress, it would be impossible for me to rest satisfied that any statement respecting it should be regarded merely as an otiose and dreamy contemplation, as a barren unproductive conjecture of a single mind, not affecting, or calculated to affect, the actual condition and prospects of earth's teeming population. Statements, I know, propounded under far higher auspices, have had to contend with that worst sort of prejudice—amounting, in fact, to bad faith, or intellectual dishonesty—which determines to misunderstand, even when the fullest explanations have been given ; with that imbecility or timidity of spirit, which for ever halts and hesitates, and cannot raise, or expand, itself to the true magnitude or grandeur of the principles which it professes to adopt ; with that dull, yet frivolous indolence, which treats every grave proposition submitted to it, as either a crotchet, or a chimera, or at best, as simply a speculation, more or less correct, more or less ingenious ; which denies it with a sluggish dissent, or accepts it with a faint and vapid acquiescence ; and then sinks back into its arm-chair, not choosing to be disturbed further, and disliking nothing so much as to be called upon to *act*. But let us now hope better things. We, at least, must be in earnest ; for the world around us is earnest. These are not times for rounding sentences, or playing with figures of speech. Passions, sentiments, ideas, feelings, the most potent, are in motion, are in conflict. A great struggle awaits mankind. Let it not become a great tragedy. Philosophy must now—I will not say, descend, but—step forward, to speak to the people with accents which shall be understood. The eternal philo-

sophy of life must be interwoven, if it be possible, with the hourly conduct of life.

For the advancement of the good and the true, every engine is needed that can be rendered available. That the scheme now proposed, when viewed in the full compass of its theory, does include, or require, through all space and all time, the perception, the enumeration, the denomination, the classification, of all substances and attributes, the observation of all laws and conditions, the development, disposition and employment of all materials and all forces, the action of all agents, the use of all instruments, by all means and modes of agency, for the attainment of all ends; that it includes, or requires, these things, both in their entire oneness, and in their utmost divisibility; blending, while it discriminates; discriminating, while it blends; "and yet an union in partition;" that it stretches itself from the secret thoughts of the individual to the collective operations of mankind; "finding the whole every where, and the action of every part every where, the whole made up by the action of every part, and every part only by means of the whole having become what it is;"—that it constitutes, therefore, an immense and stupendous undertaking; one which mocks at the efforts of any single person, and, of itself, bids man, as man, recognize his impotence, even while he collects his energies and calls forth his powers;—these are verities, which we not only have acknowledged, but again gladly proclaim, in the assurance that a two-fold benefit may be at the same instant derived from these opposite emotions, these mutually regulative considerations.

Yet such an undertaking, though vast, is not vague: though all-comprehensive, is still distinct and determinate.

And, after all, the real question is, not whether our power is unlimited, but how we may best do that which lies in our power: not whether all that we might desire can

be accomplished; but how we may accomplish most. And here we say, that system, the system of one manifold, is the greatest solution of perplexities, the greatest corrective of evils, the greatest instrument of good. It has, besides, become indispensable to our actual position. As it is the business of mankind to systematize, so it must be their business more and more. Men are now bewildered and tost about amidst a countless multitude of plans, fancies, speculations, undertakings, movements. What is most needed is to connect and bring together these desultory inconsecutive inquiries, these miscellaneous, fragmentary enterprizes; to regard and form them in a due order: and, even while breaking them up, that we may arrange them into new combinations, not to deal with them merely by scraps, but to view the whole cycle, and mark how far it has been filled in; to see what is omitted, what is superfluous; and to determine the respective plan and province of particular existences in the general design of all things. In other words, what is most needed, is not so much to discern and invent, as really to develop and use what has been long discovered; not so much to introduce principles, which are quite strange and novel, as to blend principles which have been taken separately; to invest with their rightful prominence and supremacy principles which have been almost lost amidst a crowd of others less comprehensive and important; practically to apply principles which are acknowledged in theory to be true and valuable; and to extend into their universality principles which have received a more narrow and partial recognition.

Shall we do this, or not? Shall we, or shall we not, endeavour to build a whole upon the same kind of foundation, which is of necessity laid when we would build any particular portion? Do these truths lose their truth when they are generalized and expanded? Does this expediency become inexpediency as we enlarge its dimensions? If such be not

the case, if it be the very reverse of the case, surely it is at once a mental weakness and a moral cowardice, not to carry onward our principles to their legitimate extent. It appears to me, that, in whatever shape the question is put, and whether philosophy or experience is to decide it, the same answer must be returned. Given the materials of the world, how shall we obtain the most accurate acquaintance with them and the most serviceable disposal of them? Given the means, how shall we best employ them, and avail ourselves of them? Given the ends, how shall we most completely attain them? How shall we arrive at the fullest and most correct view of the universe, how act upon it at the greatest intellectual and mechanical advantage? By system—always by system.

I would gather up the argument itself, then, from its variety into its unity. System is good. It is good on the small scale; does it cease to be good on the large? On the contrary, the larger is the scale, and more elements are included, the truer, proportionably, is our calculation, and the greater, proportionably, is our power. Yet further: unless we can reach the largest scale, and include all elements, our mode of proceeding, although our weakness may leave us no alternative, must, to a certain extent, be wrong: and if we wilfully take a part, instead of the whole; if we are contented, and more than contented, to make our speculative and practical treatment of things detached and piecemeal, without connexion or proportion, without beginning, middle, or end; it must be radically, fundamentally, and most mischievously erroneous.

A *primâ facie* case then, and a very strong one, seems to be made out in favour of universal system, so far as man can attain to universality. I do not see how it is to be resisted. Certainly, the burden of proof must rest with those who can oppose themselves to the *primâ facie* evidence,

so plain, so uniform, and coming from so many quarters. If they would assign a limit, it is for them to shew where the boundary line is to be drawn.

But I hear it said by some, Why use so many words, and take so much trouble, to vindicate and enforce a proposition which will be at once conceded to you? We allow that system is preferable to the absence of system. We allow that universal system is better than partial. But *how* is it to be formed? *What* part are the various agents and instruments respectively to take in its formation? What shape are its arrangements to assume? What are to be its classifications? What its modes of connexion and division? These are the real questions at issue: and he who cannot determine them, or at least does not grapple with them, has done nothing. We should hail and welcome one general construction, with which all the smaller constructions of men can be adjusted and harmonized. But where is the ground-plan of such a construction? What is to be its elevation? Where are the specifications and working drawings of this intended edifice?

Now, I am far from denying that these questions are relevant, and have their weight. The course of this inquiry must bring us to their serious consideration. But it was needful, I think, that the preparatory and preliminary step should be taken in the first instance. That step was the attempt to prove that a large systematization is really and truly most desirable and precious in itself; and again, that it is the growing want of mankind, the growing want of the species, the growing want of the individual. These positions I have endeavoured to establish, by touching upon those general and constant principles which are imbedded in human nature; and by alluding to the special circumstances and events of a time, believed, and not without reason, to be among those critical junctures in human history, which are,

as it were, the points of transition from one great period to another.

In many cases, without controversy, the best way, by far, of shewing that a thing can be done, is by doing it. But the formation of a general system is not altogether a case of this kind :—since it depends upon the co-operation of many persons ; and this co-operation cannot be expected, until there comes a wide and penetrating conviction of its necessity, or its usefulness : and this conviction must be produced by the proper evidences : that is, this necessity, or this usefulness, must be demonstrated, as partly by experience, so partly by antecedent reasoning. We may rejoice to think that both antecedent reasoning and the experience of mankind are now converging to this demonstration.

The present, we may be persuaded, cannot be the ultimate state of human society, more than barbarism or feudalism has been. The present state of Africa, for instance, or of Asia, or of Turkey, or of Russia, cannot possibly be its ultimate state. Why should absolute finality be predicated of our own country ? Why should we suppose that Great Britain must be stationary ? We may well hazard the prediction, that, here as elsewhere, the future will be an advance upon the present, as the present upon the past. And we may hazard this other prediction, namely, that the ultimate state will be one in which there shall be framed a general system of humanity, in its collective and in its individual phases of existence.

But is there, in the mind of the majority of persons, a genuine, cordial, thorough recognition of this truth ? Or, is there any earnest desire to bring it out of the region of speculation into the region of practice ? Let men examine and ask themselves, whether they feel the expediency and the value of an universal system, and whether they will *help* its realization ? With the will must come the way. The gene-

ral desire to perform such a work is already half to have performed it.

And therefore, I believe, the time will not have been lost in developing at some length the idea of system—the most concentrated of all ideas, and, at the same time, the most comprehensive and the most prolific : the most natural of all ideas, and yet, at the same time, the most connected with the highest and widest signification of the word, art. I believe that there may be even a peculiar advantage in setting forth this idea, simply, broadly, and by itself ; in disencumbering it from all extraneous and subsequent, all doubtful and disputable allegations. We may err, as we proceed to shew, hereafter, in what special forms, or by what special agencies, the various parts of a vast system ought to be constructed : but we can hardly err in urging the construction itself. Hence it is, among other reasons, that this primary idea has been now, as far as was possible, disengaged and separated from all else. It will be a great point gained, if the public mind of England can be brought really to entertain this idea at all. For England is that portion of the habitable globe, in which, from its intellectual and its religious, its political and its social position, the general framing of system may be most safely and most effectually commenced : and more especially at a period when larger and profounder views are gradually winning ground ; and when there have been recently written by Englishmen, on the subjects of speculative science and social economy, solid and comprehensive works, which would shed lustre on the philosophical literature of any age or country.

It is with an unfeigned diffidence that I would venture to raise any questions as worthy the notice of such men. Yet the questions which I would raise are these : whether, from their constitution and position, mankind possess the

power of acting in concert upon the whole of things, as well as separately upon each particular thing: whether, if they possess this power, there must be wisdom and profit in exerting it: whether, up to the present age, they have exerted it as they might, and as they ought; and have, therefore, really acted upon a general system: whether the time for thus acting has arrived, or is at hand:—and, moreover, what have been severally the results, as men have observed system, or neglected it.

Civilization yearns for a practical answer to these questions. For the truth always recurs, that the whole matter of system is most eminently practical. It is not only a philosophy, but an organization: it is not only a theory, but a work. It is a thing to be done. It involves in itself the common work of all; and the peculiar work of each. So practical is its nature, that, without it, the world would fall to pieces; and it is a matter in which every human being is interested, and ought to be engaged. It is the universal concern of all: yet each, as he is performing his own part, will see that the parts which others perform, are as necessary as his own; will observe, how wisely God has ordained, that, in an arrangement so infinitely diversified, the tastes and powers of men should be different, as their functions and occupations must be different; will perceive, that, in the vast scheme of existences, the scheme of knowledge and of action, of demand and supply, of means and ends, there is room for every principle; for trust as for prudence; for enthusiasm as for calculation; for faith as for free inquiry; for authority as for private judgment; for parental guidance as for filial obedience;—will discern how the respective duties of maturity and youth, of men and women, of governors and the governed, consist and harmonize with the one general obligation alike incumbent upon all, of taking a share in the great system of the universe.

But again : as the construction of system is not the work of one man, so neither is it the work of one period of humanity : it is the continuous work of all the successive generations of mankind. Sufficient honour must it be for any individual to be the simplest pioneer, or the humblest labourer, in that which is the business of all persons in all times. It is a process to be handed down from age to age ; from those who begin to those who shall advance nearer to the completion. One age lays the foundations, other ages by degrees carry upward the superstructure. The main point is, that the foundation be laid aright, and that the discouraging operation of removing and taking down shall not always interfere with the happier toil of erection.

But then, on the other side, as system is not only a philosophy, but an organization, so it is not only an organization, but a philosophy : as it is not only a theory, but a work, so it is not only a work, but a theory. And the theory, the philosophy, must come first. It must precede in the order of time, as in the order of logical sequence. Half that has been said would be incorrect and idle, unless there existed an interconnexion between these two things ; but still the general principles must be understood, before we proceed to the manner of execution. The reflection is indeed obvious ; if system must be defective, or even wrong in principle, unless it be universal ; and yet, if it be preposterous to suppose, while so many political and moral obstacles lie in the way, that mankind will all start together and at once in the formation of universal system, how is this dilemma to be overcome ? Well : we must at least meet it as we may. The mental conception must, in any case, direct the practical operations. And if the conception be just, the operations will at least be immensely facilitated : exactly as we may commence, without imprudence or inexpediency, with the wing, or apartment of a building, when we have its entire plan before us ; or as men

may begin at both ends the tunnel of a railroad, when they know how their labours are to meet.

Without question, while the tissue of things is so complicated, so interwoven, and almost "without seam throughout," some practical inconvenience there must always be, where only part of a system can be embraced. The more circumscribed the portion, the fewer the instruments and methods of action, which men have at their disposal, by so much the more, we have already argued, they must work at a disadvantage: because they are the more liable to be interrupted, thwarted, baffled, by disturbances and derangements from without, by external relations and circumstances over which they have little or no control. To be engaged in adjusting a smaller system, which lies within a larger, and is pressed by it at all points; to aim at improving a part, while the other parts are left unimproved; to attempt political ameliorations without social, or social without political, moral without material, or material without moral, collective without individual, or individual without collective, is to labour not in vain, indeed, but with comparatively poor and stunted results: just as a model-house, or lodging, may lose half its good effects, if placed in an unwholesome street, full of pollutions and vitiating influences; whereas the benefits of a model-street might derive a manifest augmentation, if fortified by the general arrangements of a model-town. On the other hand, it is no less plain, that the necessity is very often imperative for beginning one thing at a time, instead of waiting until all can be undertaken by all;—that in a great measure knowledge is to be gained by the particular inspection of particular objects in their specific properties, and internal relations; and good is to be done by the hourly action of individuals upon individuals; that if a business be too vast and cumbrous for those who set it on foot, it soon becomes unwieldy and unmanageable; and that every man, like every body of men, who assigns

himself a task, must look to his own competency, or incompetency, for its performance. But these different truths,—these opposite poles of truth—only bring us round to the same conclusion ; namely, that a right general conception, the mental scheme, or idea, of the whole, is indispensable, in order to think justly, or act with a full and lasting success, in any matter, or portion, whatever : that every man, nevertheless, must prosecute his own special and proper work, while he entertains this general conception ; that the principles can hardly be too comprehensive, the exemplifications hardly too particular ; that to take the wide without the minute, or the minute without the wide, is equally a delusion and a snare ; that the two-fold law, unity of design and division of labour, is alike applicable on the largest scale, and on the smallest ; and must be carried with us, throughout all stages, into all spheres : or in short, that from first to last, always and everywhere, there must be a system of one manifold.

2. It will be no inappropriate sequel to these remarks, that I should offer a brief concluding explanation of a more special and private nature. For each portion of the subject bears upon each : on the one hand, as the laws of system are continued throughout all departments of life, the special exemplification must reflect light on the general principles ; and, on the other hand, we should injure the cause which we are anxious to promote, if we suffered it to appear that the pursuit of the wide objects must divert us from the particular ; or, that in imagining some code, or scheme, of universal institutes, we lost sight of the good which might be effected at our own doors. Nothing could be more contrary to the true spirit of system than such a course. As it is system which tells every man, that he has both particular and general spheres of action, so it is system which warns him that he cannot be wanting to either, without mischief and blame.

Moreover, I would submit these remarks, as generally to the public at large, so especially to those persons with whom I have a ministerial connexion, and to whom my time and faculties belong as their right. This is the best, or at least the most direct proof which I can give, that system, in my view of it, belongs to quite another domain, besides that of abstract metaphysical idealism; and that what has been here suggested has everywhere its local, as well as its broader applicability. Even the public at large may be so far at least interested in the particular instance, that it affords some illustration of the ground on which this publication rests, and some evidence of the practicability and reality of its purpose. But then, again, every man, and, much more, every Clergyman, must have some spot in the wide earth, where he has a peculiar concern in impressing the fundamental truths, that neither the exigencies, nor the privileges, of mankind admit of that empty, aimless existence, which is rather playing at life, than living; that men should make system the governing law of their conduct, and place it in the foreground of their thoughts; that, as in every sphere of society, so in every district, or section, of the Christian Church, there is appointed to every man his work, "to every man according to his several ability;" that, in every such sphere, or section, there should be a scheme of things, and a combination of persons; that in this scheme, and in this combination, all the things, and all the persons, which properly appertain to it, should be included; and that such scheme, and such combination, may have its system of good offices, without any undue interference with domestic or with individual life, to either of which, though not altogether cut off from the more general system, is annexed a system of its own.

You will thus perceive, my dear Sir, one chief reason which I have had for writing this letter, instead of preparing

a more formal treatise or disquisition. I do not wish that this argument should be regarded as a mere literary exertation; not from the absurd affectation of pretending to disparage literary eminence, which, in any manner or measure, it must be honourable to attain, if no higher objects are abandoned for it; but because I should be sorry for this publication to be considered as something altogether separate and alien from my appointed duties and pursuits; and because a letter addressed to a Member of the Senate, possessing, as without flattery or compliment you must be said to possess, so many qualifications for distinction and usefulness in public life, appears more real, earnest, and business-like: and real, earnest, business-like is what I desire this production to be; since it, in fact, contains a definite proposal, and is almost as a large prospectus of ulterior labours. The subject of it has been long upon my thoughts. My mind and heart are, I confess, bent upon this undertaking: the great and necessary undertaking, as I would affirm it to be, of putting into system man's collective and individual being. Your friendship, upon which I have thus taken the liberty of obtruding myself, will excuse me for stating that, many years ago, in the ardent hopefulness of a spirit fresh from the University, I flung upon the world a course of Lectures, called "*Pneumathics*;" in the belief that many things were discoveries of my own, which I afterwards found in books; and with the intention of shewing, that while thought should take an encyclopædic range, the world also required something else besides an encyclopædia, one-half of which might be almost antiquated, before the other half was compiled. From that time, at different intervals, and amidst many interruptions, I have kept the same object in view, and have both asserted, in more than one branch of inquiry, the principles which lie at the foundation of the present design, and also endeavoured practically to exemplify them, so far as my

means and station afforded me opportunity. In several matters relating to the education of the people ; in the proposed publication, under some high sanctions, of a Yearly Report of the State and Proceedings of the Church ; in an attempt, made in conjunction with the publisher of this letter, to call the public mind to “social” questions and objects, at a period when they were by no means so fashionable and popular as they have since become ; I have still been always brought round to the necessity of some *system* of investigation, some *system* of philanthropy, some *system* of knowledge, some *system* of action, some *system* of knowledge and action *together* :—because the two cannot be quite divorced ; but the pursuit of knowledge is a main department of action ; and action in its turn must spring from knowledge, and lead to it. Moreover, in addition to some private suggestions laid before distinguished men, in the year 1842 I advertised a work under the title of “*One, Manifold ; or, the System of Whole and Parts : being an attempt to establish the first principles of Universal Philosophy and Universal Organization, in accordance with the Divine Constitution and Administration of the World*”—a title which, I would hope, is not now rendered less logical and comprehensive that it is simplified and abridged. Part of the work was at the time written and prepared for the press ; and my hope was, that the whole might be comprised in two or three volumes, and appear in the course of a few months. But many circumstances taught me that I had miscalculated, on the one side, the magnitude and complication of the undertaking itself ; and, on the other side, the number of hours which I could devote to the prosecution of it. Amidst the distractions of London, and the urgency of professional avocations, little time remained for the mechanical act of writing, and still less for close and consecutive thought ; and what was done in a few weeks of leisure, during the summer and autumn, sometimes required

subsequently to be undone : because, in the rapid march of events, the illustrations which one year furnished had become obsolete before the next year came round. But a far more serious difficulty was the growing conviction, that a system of one manifold required the three things, which have already been suggested :

- 1st. A systematic conception, or ideal, of the right and possible :
- 2nd. A systematic view of the actual ; which, as the world has many aspects, must consist of many views, and may require some great institute as an exchange, or centre, of information :
- 3rd. The application of the one of these things to the other, with reference both to the present, and to the ultimate state of human society :—

I repeat, that, as requiring these three things, it could not be a mere disquisition to be embraced in two volumes, or in any number of volumes ; but that it must be, as well as a speculative investigation, a real construction, a continuous work, in which the share of any single individual must be comparatively insignificant.

But another consideration has had its weight and influence. It has been our endeavour, as you know, to realize among ourselves the true idea of the Church, as far as our circumstances would allow. In co-operation with many most estimable men, and yourself among the number, it has been my pride and pleasure to assist in meetings, in friendly discussions, in inviting the attendance of all classes and the free expression of their sentiments ; in contributions according to our means,—contributions, which may ultimately perhaps result, if I may venture on the statement of a personal wish, in the self-assessment of a Voluntary Rate for proper objects ;—and thus to aim at a scheme of Christian agency, which might be highly beneficial in itself, without at all clashing with the

province of any other bodies, or individuals. According to my belief the result of that experiment has been, that, where we have acted upon system it has succeeded : it has failed, where we have been deficient in a systematic adherence to our principles. In connexion, too, with this experiment, I had thought of writing to a gentleman, whom it is not for me to praise, on *the Local Organization of a Christian Community* :—but I found, as every one must find, that the subject of local organization could not be treated as it ought, without reference to the vast subject of Organization at large, to the broad principles on which all organization is founded, and to the general questions involved in the whole structure of the Church and of all voluntary Associations.

Now these personal details have not been given from mere egotism, or without a purpose : they will shew that some experience of life, some study of its existing arrangements, some participation in its actual business, have led me to the opinions promulgated in this letter, as well as something of reflection and speculative research. I do not speak as a mere theorist : though I should never be ashamed of being, or of being thought, a theorist, in the proper sense of the word. It is a conviction, experimental as well as rational, which has forced itself upon my understanding, that as every locality must be regulated upon system, so every local system must rest upon those common laws, or axioms, which should direct the entire compass of systematic agency ; as for instance, that wherever there exists connexion, or interdependence, the action of each person or thing must be assisted by the consentaneous or harmonious action of every other person or thing :—or,—to express the same truth in a somewhat different form—that the freedom and efficiency with which any part works, must constantly receive increment, or decrement, in proportion, as, on the one side, the other parts are set in operation conjointly with it ; or as, on the other side, these

other parts are either inert, or else operate on some other plane or principle : above all, that a right conception of the whole is requisite for the proper administration of any part ; and that regard must be had both to *all* the *internal* relations of any smaller system considered in itself, and to *all* its *external* relations with a more general system.

These details, and these dates have been also given, because I have observed the tendency towards a general comprehensiveness in ideas and projects ; and because, while I would not lay much stress upon any claims to originality, but am aware, that such originality, wherever, and in whatever degree, it exists, must make itself evident in the compactness and coherence of a man's views, and in the strength and vividness of feeling with which he sets them forth, much more than in any emphasis of assertion that such views are original, I yet would not be supposed to have borrowed, without acknowledgement, from recent authors, notions which were formed and expressed for some considerable time before their works were published. Such details may also indicate, that the conceptions, which are here submitted to notice, have not been lightly taken up, in a fit of enthusiasm, nor can be lightly laid aside in a fit of disappointment ; but that they are convictions which have been deeply fixed in my reason, and are not likely to pass away from it ; since, in fact, the relinquishment of partial and smaller aims has been simply caused by an abiding determination to follow up the general idea of system, to the utmost of my power, in all the capacities and spheres in which it is my lot to act and move.

And these things carry me back to the assertion, with which I started, namely, that the composition of this letter has been with me a matter not only of choice, but of duty. Sentiments such as these ought not to be concealed, or disguised, from those persons with whom a Christian minister has official, intimate, and sacred relations. If cherished with

sincerity and in earnest, they must give a tone to all his ministrations. I am sensible that they have given a tone to mine; for my persuasion has been, and is, that at least as much mischief accrues to religion as to any thing else, from the want of universal system. Hence, I think, it happens, that religion is not, as it ought to be, diffused, like an atmosphere, over the whole being: it does not influence, as it ought, every portion of our existence. Too often it loses very much that it ought to possess, of reality, of freshness, of interest, of power; because it is not surveyed methodically and comprehensively, yet likewise with a direct view to all its actual and present bearings:—because it stands apart; is treated only in a dry, formal, technical manner; and even when so treated, receives, perhaps, even in its technical aspect, only a narrow, confused, fragmentary investigation.

3. The principles, therefore, which it has been sought to establish, have an especial application to religion.

If the kingdoms of nature, of providence, and of grace, all spring from the same Author, and are ruled by the same Sovereign Potentate; it might have been expected, from antecedent considerations, that they also should observe the same great law of the universe; and that system should have its work in marking the connexions, as well as the distinctions, between the three.

We have abundant reason to know that such is the case; and to know also, that to the proved analogies between the religion of Christ, and the constitution and course of nature, this is to be added;—that our business, in the one as in the other, is to trace a systematic unity amidst variety and apparent confusion.

Religion, too, is both general and special. Even Thomas Paine declared, that “all things are to be considered theologically:” and, without question, theology has its universal

relation to all other studies, while it is the sublimest of studies in itself ; and regard must be had to the wider aspect of our faith, care only being taken, that we are not as if afraid or ashamed of its peculiar mysteries.

As truth is one manifold, as good is one manifold, so the great principle of unity in variety must mount up into that region which is the centre of truth and good. Never will religion be treated aright, until it be treated both as a separate inquiry, or rule of conduct, and also in its connexion with all other inquiries and rules of conduct. Again, as Natural Theology is insufficient without the Christian revelation, so the Christian revelation is favourable, and is allied, to Natural Theology. And when I think of the teaching of Jesus himself, of its spirit and its letter, its matter and its manner, I cannot but entertain the persuasion, that, if there be any who would shut up religion entirely in a book, and conceive that, to be " Bible Christians," they must study nothing else but the Bible, and shall understand the Bible better, by disregarding other subjects with which it has links and relations, and which are a perpetual commentary upon its records, with excellent intentions they commit a serious mistake, and do equal injustice to nature and to Christianity. In one sense, Christianity is more than all ; in another sense, it is a supplement to the one manifold instruction of the universe.

This matter may also be regarded with profit from a somewhat different point of vision.

The idea of system makes an appeal to all men of all ranks, conditions, and employments. But to whom, after all, does it make its most forcible appeal ? It is not to those who desire, from worldly motives, the elevation of the labouring classes, or to the labouring classes themselves : it is not to the statesman, who would endeavour to adjust the balance between competition and communism, securing to

individuality its rights, yet promoting old, and introducing new forms of co-operation and mutual assistance; placing property on a firm basis, yet not resisting many and large improvements in social organization; it is not to the studious man, who notes, from his watch-tower of contemplation, the various springs of action, the modes in which they operate, and the unity into which their operations are combined; it is not to the moralist, who feels, as Lamartine has written, how "it is almost always in private life that the secret of public life is reposed;" it is not to the metaphysician, who now turns to his subjective "*ego*," and sees in his own consciousness the mould, the matrix, the container of the universe, creating or projecting worlds after its own image; now puts himself, as it were, out of himself, and regards himself as but a trifling unit in the immense aggregate of humanity; now surveys himself as both object and subject in one; it is not even to the mere Churchman, who casts a sagacious eye upon ecclesiastical institutions and their management:—no, it is to none of these, but to him who really surveys man and life from the religious point of view.

Such a man will believe with the German philosopher, that "we must make our life and being a part of the *one* great life and being of mankind," for else "life is a patchwork of individual parts, possessing no essential or organic unity:" but he will also believe that, since we are individual wholes, it is only in a peculiar sense that "mere individuality is a life opposed to reason:" for that, in another sense, our individual life is infinitely the most important. One thought or deed, one purpose or sacrifice of a moral agent, may be, in reality, of more consequence than all the substances and all the movements of a material creation, which can be dissolved and pass away: even though we might inspect and regulate all the great throbs of this world's life, and set in play all means and instruments of merely temporal amelioration. The

mortal existence of the individual man is, indeed, a small space in the life-time of the world; but the life-time of this world may be nothing to the future life-time of the individual. The secular well-being of all the successive generations of mankind is, at last, but a finite quantity: the future well-being of any single individual, if we suppose an everlasting duration and an intense consciousness, is an infinite quantity. It is, therefore, among the plainest deductions of reason, as well as among the first and most familiar of religious convictions, that the latter must not only be of more consideration and importance than the former, but must be so in a degree which transcends all the calculation, or comparison, that can ever be made; for that, in fact, the two things are incommensurable.

But it is not the less evident, that God has bound our two lives, our two worlds, indissolubly together; even as we may just dimly and dubiously conjecture how this illimitable universe, with all the conceptions which it involves, all its revolutions in all orbits, all its changes and successions in duration, all its phenomena of growth, decay, dissolution, reproduction, is, to the Divine mind, one idea, one movement, one eternal present in space and time. Nothing can untie the connexion between the social and the individual, the present and the future, the material and the spiritual life of man. And therefore the religious, the Christian philosopher, is, of all persons, the most bound to give its full practical development to the idea of the system of one manifold;—that idea, which renders paradoxes certainties, and connects apparent contradictions into luminous, harmonious truths. For it is this idea which throws a bridge over the yawning chasm of the sepulchre, and bids us see, how the line, which death breaks or terminates, yet runs on after death: how man vanishes, and yet survives: how his actions follow him to his immortality, and yet remain behind him, to make his

influence immortal where he has been: how, in short, every thing which appertains to him is fugitive as a dream, evanescent as a vapour, lighter than vanity itself; and yet is of moment unutterable, as the great scheme is carried forward from earth and earthly things to the mysterious Infinite beyond earth and its concerns.

These views must assure us, that the inculcation of a general system cannot be at variance with the functions of a minister of the Gospel. It is not for him indeed to pursue the matter into its minute ramifications and infinite details, with many of which he must in all human probability be utterly unacquainted, and which must at least carry him too far from the proper teachings of the pulpit, and from the pastoral cure of souls. But the great principle of one manifold cannot itself be inconsistent with the communications of that Book, which lays before us our momentous relations both with the visible and with the invisible world: which declares, that there are differences of administrations, and diversities of operations, but the same Spirit and the same Lord: that there are many members in one body: that we are members one of another: that all things work together for good to them that love God: that all things are to be gathered together into one in Him, even in Christ Jesus.

If, in recommending the formation of system,—that is, a general system of persons and things, of means and ends, descending, by regular gradations, into all its co-ordinate and subordinate branches,—any man proposed it as a light and trivial thing, or other than a matter of vast magnitude, vast complication, and calculated to lead to wide and important results, he would only prove that he did not understand the nature and extent of his own proposition. If, again, he proposed it as an undertaking which depended upon individual talent or individual resources, he might well shrink from the task in utter despondency: but, as it is the common concern

of all men, he may say without scruple, that it is a view of the whole, and of ourselves as parts of it, which gives dignity and grandeur to our being ; and that if we omit to take this view, miserably must we live below our duties, below our capacities, below our destinies. For are, or are not, the countless voices of the world gathered up into one voice, and do they, or do they not, speak to this mighty purpose ; that the entire investigation is one, yet manifold ; that the entire work is one, yet manifold ; that the investigation and the work are in their conjunction one ; that we must apply ourselves, according to our whole nature, to the whole work as it is ; that we are solemnly called to it by the immense necessities and the immense responsibilities of mankind ; at once by the wants, and the capabilities, and the developments which are exhibited on every side ; by the good which may be done ; by the errors which may be rectified ; by the crimes and sufferings which may at least be mitigated ; by the objective phenomena around us, and by every glimpse which we can obtain into the mysteries of our own being ; by all the facts and all the analogies of the universe ; by all that God Himself has indicated in his creation, or revealed in his holy Word ?

Moreover, is it, or is it not, so true, as to be a truism, that, if men had an entire scheme of existence before them ; a scheme of all the laws and conditions, which they should take into account ; a scheme of all the ends which they should seek, and of all the duration of time for which these ends must be gained or lost, they could not be quite what they now are, nor fritter away their being as it is frittered away ?—that they would not in private life sacrifice, to the momentary gratification of some baser or lower part of their nature, the permanent good of the whole ; nor would they, in their public arrangements, as in any measures of penal transportation, for instance, snatch at a temporary relief of

some immediate exigency, by the surrender of great principles, and at the certain ultimate entailment of widely-spread and long-enduring calamity?

I, at least, would once more reiterate my persuasion, that it is the want of system which makes this jungle of life; that the systematization of existence is the grand object which remains to us; the true "*instauratio magna*" of humanity; the process by which the present welfare of the race, and the immortal happiness of individuals, may be most effectually promoted. I, at least, would do my part *to introduce the age of system*; and, therefore, I would endeavour, as I have said, to raise the issue, whether the construction of a general system be a sublime aim, which may eventually, though at last incompletely, be reached by man;—or whether it be in itself an impossibility and an absurdity. And I would raise this issue now, because great crises are great opportunities. A very celebrated person has just intimated his opinion, that the late revolution on the continent of Europe, so *improvised*, and off-hand, cannot have any lasting effects. It may well, indeed, happen, that the spectacle of national convulsions will be like the sight of the drunken helot, and help to scare us from political intoxication. The shock of these events has not been yet felt upon the institutions of England, save, perhaps, in strengthening them through the abhorrence which has been caused for the excesses of a democratical fanaticism: yet the events themselves may tell indirectly hereafter, through the speculations and the notions which they may serve to engender or mature. And if it be true that the tendencies of the age are democratical, three things may be confidently stated with reference, not so much to England by itself, as to the commonwealth of European nations. The first is, that democracy without religion would be certainly the most perilous, and, probably, the most disastrous, of all experiments; and that

no other religion can regulate the passions of a people, or lay a real hold upon their understandings and affections, save the religion of Christ : the second is, that the most awful of all things, next to democracy without religion, would be democracy without system ; for it would be mere ochlocracy, or anarchy : and the third is, that religion and system, when rightly understood, are in their essence inseparable.

4. There is yet another motive which impels me.—I know not, my dear Sir, when this letter will come into your hands. It has grown more than I expected under mine. I have written it in the repose which has been afforded me from my usual duties. That thought has, by some peculiar association, constantly mixed itself up with the topics which have occupied its pages, and now urges me to add one final remark, not unconnected with the rest, on a matter to which some incidental reference has already been made :—I mean, the ills by which humanity is scourged, with the interfusion and concatenation of those ills.

For ourselves, we may have employed our holidays in the pursuit of recreation. Some have sought diversion in foreign travel, some in the sports and amusements of the country. How many thousands are there to whom the drudgery of existence allows no travel, no sports, or amusements ; and, if Sunday, with all its blessings, were blotted out of life, would allow no holidays, no recreation of frame or spirit. Some have retired, perhaps, to their parks or pleasant gardens, where the summer-trees were waving ; or have courted health and strength in the fresh breezes of the mountain or the sea : let them think of those who are pent up, from month to month, in the still fetid alleys of our towns. Some have been wandering amidst the beauties of the Rhine-land, or indulging their architectural and antiquarian tastes amidst the marvels of Italy or Greece : let them turn in thought to the multi-

tudes who are tied down to one spot by their harassing and consuming toil; or, perhaps, who have no employment at home, yet no money to emigrate, that they may look for it in other places.

I make these suggestions, not for the sake of encouraging a sickly sentimentality of complaint; as if human life could dispense with labour; or as if labour were not—I do not mean in its excess, but in its due degree—an improving and invigorating thing. But there is a grave inference to be drawn:—I have in fact, already drawn it. I cannot be blind to the fact, or insensible to its importance, that evil too, like all else around us, is one manifold. Not only is the earth overspread with derangements and miseries of which the image may well pursue us, wherever we go:—but these miseries, these derangements, multiplied as they are, all conglomerate into a hideous and terrible unity. I see men involved in a fatal web and circle of wretchedness:—with want, ignorance, crime, ever returning into each other; demoralization and destitution reciprocally cause and effect; physical debasement leading to moral and spiritual; moral and spiritual confirming and aggravating physical. I see millions in imminent jeopardy of losing both worlds: dedicated to all evil; unhappy on earth, unfit for heaven. And here, then, is introduced the most awful and solemn consideration, belonging to this whole inquiry. For what consideration can be conceived more solemn or more awful than the thought, that the principle of one manifold is of everlasting permanence; that to whatever diversity in our being we must look forward, there will be no entire disruption of its unity; that amidst the most surprising changes some identity will remain; that system appertains to all successive as to all simultaneous existence; that the law of continuity must still be in force as well as the law of transition; that the immortal life must be a sequel to the mortal; and that the habits and dispositions

which have been formed and cherished on earth will transfer themselves and their consequences into the world of eternity.

This is the constraining inducement which, most of all, must move us to the attempt of arresting, or alleviating, the evils, which we must on every side behold, and to the question, What is the best way in which the attempt can be made?—After all, there is but one way. As the disease is one manifold, so the remedy must be one manifold. The applications, so to speak, must be both general and topical. We must depend—so far as any dependence can be placed upon any human efforts—not upon one measure, or one specific, but upon a scheme of measures, combined and yet distinguished, having that separate energy which belongs to individualism, yet, not the less, adding force to each other by their union. We must have a just system; and we can only arrive at it by a well-apportioned concert of tasks and labourers; we must endeavour to provide for the mass of mankind, space, food, employment; to better their habitations and their habits; to elevate and refine their tastes; to raise their standard of comfort; to foster in them both self-development and self-denial; to inform, not only their senses and their minds, but their immortal spirits; to teach them the true ends and uses of this creation, where God exhibits at once the most exact geometry and the most lavish beauty, and combines that which is needful for physical subsistence, with that which is conducive to moral discipline; to make them feel, at last, that the world which they now behold, with all its majesty, and harmony, and bounteous increase; and, alas! with all its sins, and sorrows, and infatuations, and disorders, is but the vestibule to a more magnificent temple, or rather the veil which conceals from us another world, infinitely wider, brighter, purer, and more perfect than itself.

You will easily conceive that I have been tempted to say much more than has now been said, upon a subject which so manifestly suggests the unity in variety of history, the unity in variety of language, the unity in variety of the human race ; which, in its immense route, not only traverses the realms of matter and mind, but goes from the rude primordial forms in which matter originally presents itself, to the combinations in which it is made ready for our use, or to the shapes into which it is moulded by the manufacturer and the mechanician, or even by the sculptor and the painter ; which connects the palpable body with the algebraic symbol ; the experiments of the chemist in his laboratory with the toils of the peasant in the field ; the intellectual process of the philosophical observer with the ingenious workmanship which makes the instrument to aid his observations ; which proceeds from the widest compass of the sidereal economy to the minutest arrangement by which any person combines any two things together :—or, again, from the progressive organization of social order to the thorny problem of Liberty and Necessity ;—since even these mighty opposites, which seem to stand in tremendous contrast, may, in some measure, be elucidated and reconciled by the idea of the system of one manifold.—But I stop : for to enter further into such discussions would exceed the scope of this preparatory statement, as well as its due limits.

It is, indeed, high time to close this protracted argument, which has been framed according to my abilities, rather than according to my wishes. Yet, whatever be the result, "*liberavi animam meam*:" nor will it matter much, if this attempt should meet with neglect, or something of ridicule ; or if a brief vacation from professional pursuits shall have been spent in an unprofitable labour.

Yet, if there be truth in this idea, it will not perish. In

some shape or other, at some time or other, it will strike root and grow. Its seed is indestructible ; and it will bear fruit in due season.

Perhaps, if I had waited longer, this production might have been freed from some, at least, of the faults and imperfections with which, as I am conscious, it may now be fairly charged. But it is dangerous, if I may borrow the words from the author of *Eöthen*, “to linger too much upon the difficult pass which leads from thought to action.” Too often, while we are thinking how to act, the time has slipped away for acting at all. We have been desiring, intending, resolving, to do something. Meanwhile years pass :—their rapid current hurries on, and carries the best of our life along with it. Death thins the ranks of our friends. Our contemporaries, our juniors, fall around us. Our day declines to its evening : the night cometh, when none can work. “*Orimur ; morimur.*” And our intentions are unexecuted : we look back with useless regret on what we had hoped to do, on what our opportunities and our capacities might have allowed us to do.

Ah ! these departed years can teach men nothing, unless they have taught them, not merely the uncertainty of this mortal existence, but the fugitiveness and precariousness of those occasions and means of action on which they had most securely counted. These things, which so much depend upon health and peace, and a hundred contingencies of circumstance, may not last even so long as life lasts. Body and mind may fail us, while we are laying out projects so vast, that we cannot even begin to accomplish them. We must do, then, what we can, even while we can : satisfied, if we can add but a single stone to the edifice of human good ; happy, if, in what remains to us of a life-time, we shall be at all able to realize the fervent aspirations of youth, the earnest thoughts and wishes of manhood.

I trust that you, my dear Sir, have a long period of existence before you, to be devoted, like the past, to the service of your family and your country; and I remain

Very faithfully yours,

J. S. BOONE.

Cheshunt Cottage, Herts.

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